

## Black Ascension

### Chapter 1: Deals with pigs

Silence. Well, almost silence. You could hear the ambient sounds outside of the car, as well as Dudley's soft whimpering as he tried to get away from the freak of a cousin next to him, and not succeeding very well. Petunia Dursley was glaring at the side view mirror, trying to kill her nephew with a look that almost rivaled Snape's. Almost, because as soon as Harry's eyes met hers she turned away.

Vernon Dursley was another matter altogether. He seemed to cycle through a number of colors so rapidly that Tonks would be hard pressed to match. He went from a pale ashy white, showing he truly was frightened of the threat that those freaks at the station had given him. Then a slight blush of embarrassment from thinking of the way he must have looked, getting reprimanded like a child in front of potential clients (Vernon might act like the big bad wolf, but at work, he was a yes man. A brown noser to such an extent that it was surprising that he was able to get his head out of his boss's ass long enough to make it to the car to get home). Then a deeper red, at the realization that there was a purpose for doing what they did. They thought that he was abusing the boy! He'd only done what any respectable person would do with a freak; stuffed it away, and give it the scraps he wouldn't give a stray, until it could become useful and work the 'freakishness' out him. He'd done nothing wrong. Nothing! Then that ever famous puce color he loved sporting. And it was that freak's fault entirely. 'Well,' Vernon thought, 'The freak is really going to pay now. Just watch and see!' With that thought he reverted back to ashy, with the dread of what those other freaks would do to him if they found out.

Harry was nearly oblivious to all of this. The only thing that brought him from his musings was the feeling of being watched, until he looked up to see his Aunt had just looked away. His thoughts were dominated by the death of his Godfather and a prophecy made by a known fraud that was believed by the two biggest players in the war. It had been a few days since he was given that little tidbit of information. But of course, it had been too late. Had he known that there was a prophecy, and where it was kept, he would not have

gone to the Department of Mysteries. For that matter, if he had been told that there was the possibility that he could be sent false images and be possessed, he would have tried harder at Occlumency. Of course that one was not completely his fault. Snape may have been a potions master, but the man couldn't teach anything. All the Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs, and many Ravenclaws could attest to that fact. But no, Dumbles decided ignorance is bliss and that he should live as much as a child as he could, before somehow defeating a hypocritical psychopath with over fifty years of knowledge and extremely more powerful than him. How the hell he was supposed to do that!

But do it he must. Why? Because if he doesn't defeat the self proclaimed 'Dark Lord', then Britain, Europe, and eventually the world would be destroyed and enslaved.

'...And either must die at the hand of the other... for neither can live while the other survives...'

There's the kicker. If he doesn't kill him, no one else can. Such a lovely destiny. And now he lost his Godfather. For the first few days he was depressed. Extremely depressed. Talking to Luna helped, along with some discoveries of his own. It made him think. Sirius wasn't afraid of death, and he wasn't coming back from beyond the veil. He wouldn't want Harry to mope around, blaming himself. Then there was the guilt. That was just as bad as the feeling of loss. He thought it was entirely his fault. But he realized something; he had tried. He had talked to Snape, he wouldn't listen. He talked to Kreacher, he lied and betrayed his master (that thing was going to die for what he did). So it wasn't like he ran into a dangerous situation without trying to make certain that he was there. Not like he usually would have done. He did blame himself, but he blamed the others just as much. Beside, there was plenty of blame to pass around. Snape, while a snarky git and all around bitter man should have been able to see past a twenty year old grudge with a dead man to confirm or deny his suspicions. Bellatrix definitely had some for killing him, Merlin he wanted to kill that bitch, and Sirius's had some too, for not taking a potentially fatal duel seriously. That was a lesson his Godfather taught him that he would always remember; never

underestimate your opponent. Finally, there was Dumbledore and Voldemort.

He hoped that he had weakened the bastard as bad as he felt after being possessed by him. Though that wasn't very likely, as he was still able to get away. Then again, perhaps some good had come from being possessed. As he was struggling for control of his own body, he felt something break, and with the rush of emotion he was able to push Old Voldie out of his head.

It wasn't until the next day that he realized that he seemed different. He felt, well, lighter. Like there wasn't anything holding him back. Like his mind was free. And he saw, well lights, or something around people if he concentrated on them. Some lighter, some darker. The colors varied from a light, barley noticeable color with various other colored patterned strands which seemed to be the majority of the students, which went through a wide spectrum of color. Only a few people had all one color strands and a base color, a handful of students and a number of the teachers.

The students tended to be the stronger ones in the upper years with some, like Luna with light blue with gold strands, Ginny with a deep scarlet with silver strands, the Patil twins; Padma having purple with light mocha strands while her sister had the opposite, and Neville's was a pastel orange with yellow strands with some Slytherins like Blaise Zabini, a quite but beautiful girl who had a pale green with eggshell strands, Draco Malfoy had grey with wine strands, and surprisingly Pansy Parkinson who had a greenish blue with ruby strands, who were in the younger years. The teachers included McGonagall who had light scarlet strands and a deep goldish base, Snape with a medium coffee base with silver strands, and Flitwick with periwinkle blue strands with a purple base. Dumbledore had a deep copper outlined with white for the strands with an odd shade of blue and silver as a base (it actually reminded Harry of a pair of robes he had seen Dumbledore wear once, only the robes had forks and spoons running along the hem and a jumping cow over a moon). Unlike the others who had the colors fade in and out in intensity, Dumbledore's was a constant flare. But they all had an outline of some sort outside the regular colors which seemed to change on its own accord. He did notice that it stayed one color or another when

they talked or looked at him, but generally changed to something different once they left. He didn't tell any one because it wasn't hurting him and it took his mind off things when he didn't want to think of anything else.

With this weird sight thing came the difference in mind. It was like he was allowed to think clearer for the first time in a very long time. But it was different. He began to think a little more stoically, a little more Slytherin, he supposed. And it was mainly due to this new way of thinking that he was able to get past his Godfather's death and see that it was not all his fault.

He had yet to get any pains or visions, of course, which could be because Voldemort assumed that Harry wouldn't be as stupid as he was the last time and fall for another false image. 'Then again, he could just be holed up somewhere, too weak send one.' Tom Riddle a.k.a. Voldemort a.k.a. He-who-has-as-many-hyphens-as-me.

'He will pay. He has directly or indirectly destroyed everything resembling a life for me. Kill or be killed? Yeah, well I have got no problem with that. Not for the wizarding world though. What have they done for me? Hailed me as a hero, and then trampled on me whenever it took their fancy. People may be smart, but society as a whole is incredibly stupid and gullible. No, if I do it, it is for me, for revenge. Voldy and all of his bootlicking servants will get there's too.' Harry's thoughts were cut off here as they pulled up to the house.

Dudley jumped out of the car and waddled up and into the house faster than Harry had ever seen him move, which wasn't saying much as Harry thought a slug could outpace his baby whale of a cousin. His Aunt left much faster beating Dudley to the door after giving Harry one last glare. Vernon had just cycled through his colors back to a pale ashy white and decided that if he was to do anything, it would be in the house. Away from that crazy-eyed freak and the rest of the boys friends. He threw the keys at the boy and waddled in after his wife. Realizing that no one was going to help him, Harry got out and went to the boot and struggled to get his trunk and Hedwig's cage out and get it up the stairs to his ... no, Dudley's second bedroom. He had sent Hedwig ahead so as not to annoy her with a ride in the boot.

‘Merlin, I hate this place.’ He thought to himself. ‘Why do I have to be here again? Oh yeah, Dumbledore. Blood wards. I wonder how those work any way. They can’t be anymore effective then the Fidelius Charm, especially if Dumbledore was the secret keeper. And what do they do when I’m not here the rest of the year? Another thing I have to figure out.’

Sitting down on his poor excuse for a bed he began to reevaluate his life. ‘Well,’ he thought, ‘I think that all my trust in Dumbles has been exhausted. He should have told me the prophecy when I asked him, at the end of first year. I never had a childhood to begin with, how to do I continue what I never had? He had to know how I grew up. He had to, even if he never bothered to check up on me, my acceptance letter said cupboard under the bloody stairs for Merlin’s sake! And if I am so bloody important, why the hell didn’t he check up on me?’ thump! Harry fell off the edge of the bed and onto the floor. His Uncle could be heard yelling about freaks with no respect for the quiet of a household. But Harry didn’t hear anything as he was hit with the impact of his train of thought.

‘I don’t matter to him. I’m not Harry Potter, fifth year student. I’m Harry Potter, the-boy-who-lived, weapon of the light! Something to be locked away and used when needed. Oh bloody hell!’ were his thoughts as seemingly random events played before his eyes.

Hagrid, telling an 11 year old Harry about the evilness of the dark and Slytherins. “There’s not a single witch or wizard who went bad who wasn’t in Slytherin” Mrs. Weasley talking loudly about muggles and asking which gate the entrance was at. Ronald Weasley’s biased opinion of the serpent house.

‘Hagrid was wrong; Peter Pettigrew proved that right quick. And there have always been others from different houses who have joined Dark Lords. Acadian Nott, Theodore Nott’s Uncle was a Ravenclaw, they came from everywhere. And how is it that a woman with seven children, five of which were attending Hogwarts, her old school, not know where the gate is. Just happening to solve my dilemma and introducing me to the most light-sided pureblood Dumbledore fanatics you could Draco Malfoy’s blatant arrogance and racism, and you

have a recipe for the perfect Gryffindor golden-boy.' And that was just to keep him out of Slytherin.

Every year was test, and every year he just barley made it out alive. The stone, how is it that the Protection for one of the most valuable artifacts in the world can be defeated by three first years? Using the mirror of Erised as the final obstacle after carefully explaining how it works. Showing up right on time to make sure Harry doesn't die with the excuse that he and the owl passed in flight. The man makes portkeys left and right. And ff it was such an emergency he could have easily flooded or apparated.

Second year, third year, fourth. A good majority of events were preventable but Dumbles let them go, doing his part by being aware and allowing Harry to take care of it as just another test. Fifth year was by far the worst with being kept in the dark and ignored.

'Well no more' vowed Harry. 'No more ignorance, no more weakness. I will do what I have to do. Whatever I have to do. I will learn and I will become more powerful. Not Dumbles or his turkey club will stand in my way. I've got to be careful though. If anyone were to catch wind of what I want to do Dumbledore will attempt to shut it down fast and It will be much more difficult be able to do what I want and need to do. How the hell does he think I will be able to defeat him with no training anyway? First I need a plan. Where to go, what to get, and how to do it. And I can't stay here, so I will have to find another place to stay. My parents were supposed to be well off, it is possible that they owned other properties.'

With those thoughts Harry went downstairs to make dinner for his oh so loving relatives.

"Boy, what the hell did you tell those freaks we were doing to you!" Uncle Vernon screamed in response to his dinner being served.

"I didn't tell them anything Vernon. They see what I look like after holidays, and despite what you may think, they are not stupid. Probably a good deal smarter than you." Harry replied in a smooth voice he didn't know he had.

“Boy don’t you take that tone with me. This is my house! I demand respect! And I will not be made a fool of in front of hundreds of people in a train station! Those were potential customers you little shit!” Vernon said as his face turned a burgundy color.

“Why go there when you can be made a fool of in the comfort of your own home?” retorted Harry, setting Vernon off, standing up and making him turn his Rhino-purple which screamed ‘Danger!’ to anyone who knew the signs.

“Sit down Dursley.” Harry said in that same smooth voice with a deadly edge to it. “Now, I’ve got a proposition for you, you greedy pig. I’ll pay you 500 pounds a week for you to stay off my back and out of my hair. I will not do the chores. I will leave whenever I feel like without consequences. I ask that you respect me and my belongings and in return I will stay out of your hair. Unless, that is I need something, and in the case of that, I will make sure there is incentive, don’t worry. Do we have an agreement? Harry Finished.

It was truly hilarious to watch Vernon’s reaction. First he wanted to squeeze the life out of the boy for ordering him to do something. Then the offer made its way through his head. ‘500 pounds was a lot of money.’ Vernon thought. ‘Where would the freak get it from? Doesn’t matter. I’ve never asked where money came from any other time, just that it was where it was supposed to be. Hmmm.’

“Alright, boy. First off, it will be 1,000 pounds. You have been a burden for too long on this family, and it is time you paid for it, with interest. You will be doing the cooking though, and no other freaks in the house.” Ended Vernon, with a smugly satisfied look on his face. Harry however was livid.

“I’m a burden? A burden! You barely fed me anything and locked me in a cupboard! I’ve done all the labor on this house and the chores since I could walk. A child should not have to know how to cook a full meal at five years old or be able to determine cleaning products by their smell. Your son is probably more of a burden, what with the cost of his food equaling that of a Hogwarts feast!”

At this pronouncement Vernon stepped back with a look of disbelief at the audacity of the boy and fear. Harry stood up and glared at his Uncle with pulsating Avada Kedavra green eyes that seemed to pierce your soul. A light breeze from nowhere swirled around him, pulling his usually short, chaotic hair into a halo of darkness that cascaded around his shoulders. It made for an intimidating sight.

“No, Dursley you will not take liberties with my generosity. 500 pounds, no more you greasy swine. I will cook if it takes my fancy. You will stay away from me, and I will do whatever the hell I please. Neither you nor anybody else is going to tell me otherwise. You get in my way; you will be taken care of. My friends want me treated well, you wouldn’t want them to show up here now would you?”

Harry’s eyes had stopped pulsating and settled into a dull throb. The wind settled, but left his hair just as long with an odd sheen that made it look as if he had extremely dark crimson highlights. Petunia stumbled back with a hand over her mouth in a silent scream with a look of disbelief like Vernon’s. Only her face held something else. Recognition, perhaps? It was like she was seeing him for the first time. Harry was oblivious to this as he continued to look at Vernon.

“Now again, I ask, do we have an agreement?” Vernon could only nod his head, not trusting himself to speak, lest he embarrass and humiliate himself further in front of his family.

“Good. Now that that is all taken care of, I’m going to bed. ‘Night.” And with that he went upstairs. ‘I need a shower,’ he decided. ‘tomorrow.’ He changed his mind as his bed began to look enticing. ‘Yeah, tomorrow.’ He thought as he yawned and fell into the pad he called a bed.

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End Chapter

Alright, so what do you think? I hope you enjoyed it. More to come soon. Please, leave a review, they tell me what you think of the story and you readers have great ideas. All right, next one is already out, so read it and tell me what you think.



## Chapter 2: Vestigium Occultus

In the morning he was awakened not by his Aunt screaming at him to make breakfast, but an Owl. Getting up he opened the window for an odd looking owl with sharp claws with spidery wings and clever eyes. A Grådighet Owl, if he remembered correctly, from one of the few History of Magic classes he paid attention to. They were used exclusively by the Goblins, so evidently he was getting a letter from Gringgotts. He gave the owl some water and a treat (not realizing Hedwig had not yet made it from Hogwarts) as he took the letter from the Goblin's Owl. 'Well, the only reason they could want to contact me would be for Sirius's will, I suppose. But I wonder how they found out about that. The ministry, as far as I know, is not even aware. Doesn't matter, the Goblins are a lot more competent than the Ministry, it really shouldn't be a surprise. I'll open this later. First I need a shower. Sitting too close to a pig can't be too good for your hygiene.

Walking out of his bedroom he passed Dudley who attempted to push him out of the way to get into the bathroom.

"I suggest you back off. I was here first. Wait your turn." Deciding that this was too good to pass up he continued, "I'm actually surprised Dudley, to see your interest in taking a shower. Good for you, maybe now you won't smell like an ass. But you still have to wait. " This was too much for Dudley, who was trying to think of a biting comeback, but only succeeded in looking constipated. Then, with a near audible grinding noise he got an idea.

"Dad," Duddikens yelled. "The freak won't let me into the bathroom! Tell him to get out of my damn way!" with that, Dudley settled back with a smug look, deciding that his father would take care of everything and that nine months was too long to not see the freak get shown his place. 'He really should have been home for dinner last night, instead of tormenting seven year olds. Well, his ignorance is my entertainment.' Harry thought to himself.

"Leave him alone Dudley," said Vernon from the kitchen in a pained voice. "He's paying for his keep; I'll build you your own bathroom next week." Dudley looked disbelieving for a second, then perplexed.

‘Even if the freak was paying for himself, why would dad listen to him? What did he do to them? He must have done something... he must have used his freakishness on them!’

“I don’t know what you did to them, but I will find out. And when I do you will pay for it, Freak.” Said Dudley in what he thought as an intimidating voice. With that Dudley stalked off, thinking about what he could do to his cousin for corrupting his parents with a sick gleam in his eye. Had Harry seen that look, he might have been worried, but he didn’t.

Getting out of the shower he noticed through the foggy mirror that his hair was longer. He quickly wiped the mirror to get a better look.

“What the hell is going on?” he asked the mirror. It looked and felt real. But his hair was never this straight. Or long, or had red in it. Which was odd, he decided. ‘Why have I never had to have a hair-cut? And why was it that when I did, it grew back the next day?’ He decided to contemplate that later as he got a good look at his face. He looked, well different more like his mum, actually. He had her nose, something that had always looked a little wide, was now smaller and more elegant. His features over all looked more, well, aristocratic. He could still see some of his father in himself, but a lot was subtly replaced by something else. It was something familiar, comforting almost. He just couldn’t place it. When had this happened? Yesterday, perhaps? He did feel a little odd during the confrontation with Vernon. Could that be why his Uncle looked scared? ‘Whatever it is, it’s not hurting me. On the contrary, I look damn good, so it can’t be all that bad.’ He thought as he left the bathroom.

Entering his bedroom he saw another letter sitting on his desk waiting for him in Dumbles loopy script. ‘Well, lets see what the old man wants.’

Dear Harry,

I hope that this letter finds you well. I apologize for any pain I may have caused you. I assure you that this was not my intent. All I can

say, once again, is that everything I have done has been in your best interest.

That said I am sorry to inform you that you will not be able to leave your home before the end of summer. I may be able to retrieve you for your birthday, but you would have to come back the next day. The Order will, of course, be monitoring your neighborhood to ensure your safety and that of your family.

I realize you may not like your aunt and uncle, but it is necessary to live with them in order to ensure the blood protection, for their sake as well as yours, during the summer. I also regret to inform you that due to the danger of interception, you will not be able to send or receive post from your friends.

Sirius's death was not your fault. Many events amalgamated together to give us the nightmare that was the Department of Mysteries. You must study harder at occlumency to make sure that something like this does not happen again. During the beginning of the year I will be unavailable, so you must continue with Professor Snape again. Perhaps this time you will give him your full attention?

If you are not yet aware, let me tell you that Gringotts will be contacting you soon for the will reading of Sirius Black. I stress to you the importance of your safety and the major security risk that this event encompasses. In light of this I have decided that I will act as your representative and pass along anything you will receive. I'm sorry that things have to be this way. I truly am.

Albus Dumbledore

'Well isn't that special,' thought Harry. 'So the old man thinks an apology is going to fix things. "In your best interest", what does the old man know about what is best for me? He is locking me away, trying to cut me off from the world with the excuse of my safety. More like the less I know, the more dependant on him I am. Can't even leave the house! There monitoring me. That may make things slightly more difficult. No post, I wonder if Ron and Hermione will realize that with so many bodyguards they could easily pass along a note with

one of them. Probably not; Ron is too stupid, and Hermione will think that no post means absolutely none.'

"I may be able to get you out for your birthday, but you would have to come back the next day", 'He may be able to get me out? He's the one forcing me into this prison. It's not like anyone is pulling his strings. Just trying to make sure that I am grateful for being paroled for a short time. Merlin, the man has orbs to say something like that.'

"Necessary to live with them in order to ensure the blood protection, for their sake as well as yours, during the summer", 'well that explains some about the blood wards. They only protect me during the summer, but it protects my family through out the rest of the year. Screw that, they have done nothing for me but abuse me, physically and mentally. It's muggles like them that created Voldemort. If they are attacked after I leave, then so be it. It won't be any more than they deserve.'

'Is he really suggesting that it was my fault that I was unable to learn occlumency? When the oil slick can't see past my resemblance to a dead man to even attempt to teach me? He did nothing more than rape my mind for his perverse pleasure. Pulling up any and every horrible memory I had. "Clear your mind" my ass. He probably made it easier for Voldie to get into my head. There's no way Occlumency is supposed to make you so weak. Snape will get his the next time I see him.

'Well now I know that the Gringotts letter is what I thought it was for. Who is he to tell me that I can't go to the will reading of the only family I have ever known. True, I never got to know him very well, but he was like a really cool dad. He has no right to tell me I can't go. I'll figure a way. Goblins, while greedy little individuals are clever, and if their protections on the vaults are anything to go by, more powerful than wizards give their lot credit for. Could be useful if I could get one or two to help me out.

No, he's not sorry. Not yet anyway. He'll be sorry when he realizes he has screwed my life up almost as bad as Voldemort, and that I am aware of it. He has lost his weapon forever. Never again will I be controlled by him.

Ripping the letter up into little pieces until even a 'Reparo' wouldn't fix it helped ease his anger a little. Getting up he looked at the letter from Gringotts. Looking closely, he could make out a somber grey colored outline around it, like the outline of the lights he had seen around the people at Hogwarts. He noticed that it felt a little heavier than a regular letter and resembled a small package more. Upon opening it, three things fell out. The first item was a folded letter which was attached to the second item, a square leather pouch that couldn't possibly fit into a letter envelope without magical aid. The third was a chain with a large pendant at the end that looked like the Gringotts seal.

He decided read the letter, the answers to what the items were would most likely be explained.

Dear Mr. Potter

We here at Gringotts send our deepest sympathy for your loss. We are contacting you to make sure that you are aware of your summons to Gringotts for your part in the will of Sirius Orion Black as main beneficiary. The will must be executed no later than August the 1st. After that date anything and everything that has been left to you will go to the next of kin. In this case, Bellatrix Black Lestrangle and Narcissa Black Malfoy as the only kin not disowned. There will be a public reading on July the 13th for all named in the will.

However, if it is not possible for you to attend (due to circumstances beyond your control), contact us through the mail pouch. Simply put your letter into the pouch, and tap your wand on the seal three times, stating who you are, the subject of the letter, and who the recipient is at each tap. It is a much faster and more secure way of sending information as it can not be intercepted. The chain and pendant show you as a beneficiary and cannot be stolen once it takes a blood sample. This helps if you wish to not alert anyone to your presence. Simply show it to a goblin and he will bring you to me.

Again, we extend our sympathies to you.

Yours in Business,

Silverhook, Black family Account Manager

'Interesting,' thought Harry after reading the letter. 'Yes, Goblins are definitely not given enough credit. This will help might just help me to get around the Bird Club. It seems as though Dumbledore isn't as loved as he would claim to be. He must have done something to piss the Goblins off like this. I wonder if the pouch can send items too. I'll have to find out. Given enough incentive, I think I might be able to get Silverhook to assist me in my jail break.'

'I'll write to Silverhook later to tell him of my situation. First I need to think about what I want to do and what I need to get.' So sitting down at his desk he began to make a list.

- Need to go review what I should know
- Need books on all the subjects. Charms, Transfiguration, etc. and Occlumency/Legilimency, Animagus, Runes, Arithmancy
- Need Clothes
- Way to do magic outside of school
- Find a way to become more powerful, fast (Voldie isn't going to wait around now is he?)
- Fix eyes (Glasses are no good in a battle)
- Take care of business at Gringotts
- Better shape (Quidditch may help for stamina, but I'm still weak)
- Figure out a way to get to Diagon Alley without alerting the Burnt Turkeys
- Get money out to pay the Pig
- New wand (Can't kill the Dark idiot with my wand)

- Living appliances (Got to make sure I can live where I am going)
- Leave quickly after attaining what I need
- Figure out what this sight thing is

Well, that's out of the way. I hope I can get this done fairly quickly. 'Where is Hedwig, I wonder? Maybe it's a longer flight than I thought. I should write to Silverhook now.'

Dear Silverhook,

Unfortunately our mutual friend has deemed that it is too great a security risk for me to leave my house for any reason this summer. That said I would like to get this taken care of as soon as possible. I can't do what I need to do in this prison so I will be leaving soon. I believe that the rest of the Wizarding world does not give the Goblins enough credit. This mail pouch is amazing. Something like this could put Owls out of business.

Provided that enough incentive is given, I was wondering if you knew a way around this pesky underage magic law. It's really limiting me, and I would like to do away with the blasted impediment.

Thank you,

Harry Potter

Putting the letter in the pouch and tapping it three times while saying 'Harry Potter, Confirmation, Silverhook, Black family Account Manager'. The leather glowed an ethereal black and emerald before filling up with air and deflating the pouch up, Harry saw that the letter was no longer there.

'I don't need another confrontation right now. I'll wait until Vernon's gone for work and Dudley has left the building before getting something to eat. Well, let's get to work. I have five years of work to review, and the sooner I can get that out of the way, the sooner I can leave.'

Gathering all his books together he realized that he could only use two of the five defense books from school. Those were the ones picked by Remus and the Mad-eye Imposter. 'Funny,' Harry thought, 'I have been taught more about defense from Death Eaters and 'Dark Creatures' than by any other teachers. That's just sad.' He concluded. Deciding to do one subject a day he figured that he would be done by the weekend

He decided to start on potions first as it was his worst subject, then do Charms, Transfiguration, Herbology, and finally Defence. History of Magic was a lost cause, as was Divination. If he had enough time he might try to pick up Ancient Runes and Arithmancy. Runes were used in some Rituals, Wards, and Enchantments which could all be very useful. Arithmancy was used in spell creation and modifying spells.

Going through his potions textbooks he couldn't quite understand why he had could comprehend, or enjoy potions for that matter. Going through his notes he realized that there were reasons certain ingredients reacted badly with each other, and once those reasons were understood, potions were quite simple. It was a lot like cooking, if you understood how different foods would react together, you get the desired taste. However, if Snape would have explained these little facts, things would have been easier from the beginning. He attributed his ability to comprehend the art of potions to his new state of mind. He was about half way through his Potions textbooks when the Mail Pouch inflated, alerting him to mail being received. Inside were a letter and a bottle of an amber colored liquid. 'I guess that answers the question about whether or not items can be sent through the pouch.' He thought to himself as he opened the letter.

Dear Mr. Potter,

Yes, our friend can be incredibly vexing at times. Money and flattery will get you everywhere with Goblins, Mr. Potter. Something the Potter family never quit understood, I am told. But you seem different Mr. Potter. Enclosed is the 'Vestigium Occultus Potion'. This potion only works on small, magical items, as it is technically a poison and is potentially fatal if ingested. It eliminates any tracking charms placed on the item, even Ministry regulation tracking charms for underage



Magic use. Simply place the item in the potion until it absorbs all of it. This potion is a level 3 Ministry regulated item, Mr. Potter. If you are found with it, you did not get it from us.

I will assume we will discuss this 'Incentive' you mentioned when you next come in? We hope that this helps you in your endeavors, and hope to see you soon at Gringotts.

Yours in Business,

Silverhook, Black family Account Manager

'This is excellent' he thought to himself, 'Now the Ministry won't know about my magic use.' Placing his wand in the potion, he sat down to finish his potions book from 3rd year. Ten minutes later his wand had soaked up every last drop of the potion and glowed the same amber color for a moment. When it was done he decided to test it.

"Reparo!" he shouted. Like a tape on rewind, all the broken items that littered his shelf were fixed. "That was more than expected. If the potion worked, then the Ministry is no wiser and I won't receive an owl." Fifteen minutes passed by and Harry continued to look out the window, looking for anything in the distance resembling an owl. Then he saw it. An owl, heading dead straight towards him.

00000000000000000000000000000000

That's the end of this chapter, tune in next time. I hope you enjoyed it. Review if you will. It helps so much in writing to get feedback. If it sucks, tell me. If you like it or think that it can be improved, tell me. Alright, I'm out.

### Chapter 3: True Black

Harry breathed a sigh of relief. It was Hedwig. She looked tired and very relieved to be home.

“What happened to you girl? You okay?” Harry asked as he opened her cage to place her on the perch. She gave a thankful hoot as he filled her bowl with treats and some water for her to drink. “That’s better isn’t girl. I’ve missed you. We may not be staying here for too much longer. I can’t take the old mans manipulations anymore. Were going to go out on our own, just you and me girl. Get away from my family. How’s that sound?” Hedwig nodded her repeatedly.

Settling back down on his bed he continued studying his potions books until he came upon a potion that just might fit his needs. True, he was bribing his Uncle to do what he wanted, but Harry didn’t want to leave anything to chance.

#### Gregory’s Unctuous Uncction

This is one of the more advanced potions covered in this book. The Unctuous Uncction persuades the drinker into believing that the giver is their best friend. Under the influence of the potion, the supplier will be able to get the recipient to do something relatively easily, or with little coercion. This does not work on the strong willed or magically powerful. If done correctly, it will have a slight cream color.

Checking to make sure that he had all the ingredients, he decided that he would make the potion Friday night and give it to Vernon with his coffee, instead of creamer. ‘I can get Vernon to take me to Diagon Alley on Saturday, and then I can leave Sunday or Monday. This just might work.’

After finishing his potion texts he went downstairs and grabbed what was left of dinner and took it to his room, wanting to avoid talking to or seeing his relatives.

And so it went for the next few days. Wake up, grab breakfast, shower. After shower he would see if anything else was different with his body. Nothing much had changed with his face, except his eyes

had gained a metallic silver rim around the electric Avada Kedavra green, which made his eyes seem brighter and more dangerous looking than his usual emerald color. But he did seem to be growing (faster than was natural), and his chest was broadening. 'What is this?' he thought, 'Puberty on steroids?' after he had seen that he had grown a good five inches since coming home. He now stood a respectable 5' 9".

Once he made it back to his room, he would study for a few hours until lunch, where he would eat in his room, and study for the rest of the day. By Friday he was able to get through his core subjects. It was unbelievable how much he had missed. The theories and laws that he had not bothered to learn or didn't understand were the reasons for his struggling with anything they had taught him over the past year. But it all made sense now. He was able to easily cast the spells that he had difficulty with before.

During those few days he had only run into his Uncle a few times, which usually ended in awkward silence. But as soon as Harry left the room, pieces of furniture could be heard being broken from the end of the block. It was a wonder the Fried Chickens didn't come to see what was wrong. After they had all gone to bed, Harry would repair most of the furniture just to see how Vernon reacted the next morning when the chair he nearly tore in half was fixed and looked better than new. He also added durability charms so that it would take more effort to break. His Aunt tended to stray away from him, choosing instead to give him odd looks from afar. Dudley was almost withdrawn, wearing a look usually depicting constipation, which for him, usually meant thinking. But of what, and why, Harry didn't know.

Harry decided that he should start the potion now so that it would have time to settle and chill. Setting up his pewter cauldron, he got the ingredients out. The total time it would take to make was 45 minutes, in which most of it was stirring. He boiled the water, slowly adding powdered fly wings and parsnips ends, he let simmer for 10 minutes. Adding one drop of Essence of Hellebore for every counter stir for 20 minutes and crushed Black Beetle eyes every 5 minutes until he had only about a minute left of brewing, and added the final ingredient. Three drops of blood. He took his knife he used for cutting up the ingredients and nicked the end of his finger, putting pressure

on it until three large drops of blood had landed into the simmering concoction. He let it sit for half an hour before pouring the potion into the pitcher that held the creamer in the fridge to chill. The potion was not perfect, but was much better than he normal would have made with Snape leaning over his shoulder, dripping grease into his cauldron.

Waking up early the next day, Harry went downstairs to make breakfast and put his plan into action. Twenty minutes later extra oily bacon, eggs, and biscuits were done. The bangers were still frying when Petunia came down stairs. She gave him one of her now usual looks and sat down at the table. After serving her breakfast and special coffee, Vernon came down.

"What are you up to boy? Asked Vernon.

"What ever do you mean, Uncle Vernon? Can't I make breakfast for my family?" Harry replied in a sickly sweet voice that put Vernon on edge. "I was hungry, Uncle. I wanted breakfast, so I made some. I figured I ought to make the rest of you something too. Okay?" Vernon seemed satisfied with that answer, even if it irritated him for the boy to talk to him in such away.

"That's better. 'Bout time you made yourself useful." Said Vernon smugly. Harry bit back a comment as he served his Uncle his breakfast and coffee. Vernon took a sip, then another. He ate his breakfast without any real change in his demeanor until he got up, wiped his mouth and thanked Harry before beginning to walk away. Petunia just stared at her husband like a deer caught in head lights. 'Well, I guess it worked. Better hurry up and ask him before something happens.' Harry thought to himself.

"Uncle Vernon, do you think you could take me to London today?" Harry asked in a forced friendly tone.

"Huh?" Vernon said dumbly. "Oh, yeah sure. When?" he asked.

"Ten minutes sound okay?" Harry asked in a less forced manner.

"Sure thing Harry. Ten minutes. How much will you give me though?"

‘Well, it seems as if he has a stronger mind than I gave him credit for.’  
“How does 250 pounds sound?”

“That sounds good. Be in the car at the door in 10 minutes.” With that Vernon left to get ready. This was the scene that met Dudley.

“What’s going on mum?” asked Dudley in an uncertain voice.

“I really couldn’t tell you Diddy. But don’t worry about it. I’ll buy you a new cell phone with the freaks money.” Petunia told her distraught son. But Dudley couldn’t help but think that something was going on. He decided that with the freak away, he could put his plan (which had taken the better part of a week to figure out) into act. Running upstairs, Harry grabbed his cloak and list while telling Hedwig that he was going out while giving her some more food.

Ten minutes later found Harry under his invisibility cloak, waiting for Vernon.

“Where are you Harry?” Vernon asked, looking around.

“I’m right here Uncle. You just can’t see me. Open the backdoor to put your briefcase back there and I will slip in after it. Don’t worry, you will be properly compensated for dealing with this.” Vernon still looked unnerved, but the thought of more money had placated him. As they walked out, he could almost see the outline of a light surrounding a body, almost neon in color, but it looked as if no one was there. ‘I cant’ see through the cloak, but I can tell that there is one. I wonder who is on my detail today.’ Harry thought as he got in the backseat behind Vernon’s briefcase.

“To London, Harry, right?” Vernon asked as he drove off. His tone was more forced than it was previously. ‘The potion must be starting to wear off. Hopefully we can make it to London before it stops working.

“Yes Uncle. Charring Cross more specifically.”

“What do you need in London anyway?”

“Some clothes and other stuff. It will probably take a while for me to get done. Most the day, actually. Don’t bother coming to pick me up.”

“Too right.” He heard his uncle mutter.

Back at Privet Drive, pig in a wig, usually referred to as Dudley, tried to sneak his way up the stairs. Succeeding in making a little less noise than was usual for him. Which was not saying much. He had decided that if the freak was going to get his parents to do stuff, even if he was paying for everything, he needed to be taught a lesson since his dad wouldn’t do it anymore. ‘Where did the freak get money from anyway? Probably stole it using his freakishness!’ Dudley thought. Opening up his cousin’s door slowly, he crept in.

“Here birdie, birdie, birdie....”

It was around 10 a.m. that they arrived at Charring Cross Road. Donning his cloak, he slipped out of the car. His Uncle could be heard cursing ungrateful freaks that made him drive for no real good reason. ‘Seems that I made it just in time for the potion to wear off. I don’t think I’ll be using that one again. I’ll have to wait for someone to open the door, don’t want to raise suspicions do we?’ 10 minutes later he had made it through both the bar and into the Alley with no one the wiser.

Navigating Diagon Alley in an invisibility cloak is a little bit harder than one would think. There were a few close calls when someone had almost stepped on him and other times when he was nearly snagged on an item of some sort or another. Finally he made to the white marbled building that was Gringotts. Walking up to a Goblin with no line he took out his chain with the pendant and presented it to the Goblin. The Goblin looked up to where Harry should have been for a second before nodding.

“Very well, sir. If you would just follow me.” Said the Goblin, getting up and walking down a low hallway without waiting. ‘This place is a maze.’ Thought Harry, ‘There are way too many doors.’ After passing too many doors and other criss crossing hallways they came to a door with a name emblazoned under a large crest.

'Silverhook, Black family Account Manager' it read under a crest with a silver bear-like dog with blazing onyx depthless eyes that seemed to have pierce your soul and found you left wanting. The Grim was under the Procyon star of the Canis Minor constellation. Wrapped around the dogs neck was a black and silver Racer snake with glinting pulsing silver eyes that glowed brightly for a moment upon seeing Harry. Stopping at the door to get a better look at the crest, he was startled to hear the snake speaking to him.

"Ah yesss, the last Black heir. I can sssee it in your aura, and it never lies. A recent change I see in your eyesss. How, interesssting. Scarlet and Gold may have been your father's path, and yours also, in the past, if I am reading you correctly. But true Black and Silver is your future. It iss odd that I have not seen you sssooner though. Something to ponder. Oh, how I do love riddles..."

"What does my father have to do with anything? And why should you have seen me before?" demanded Harry in parseltounge with a tone that would stop fire. This inadvertently sent a shiver down the spine of the Goblin who was accompanying him, reminding said Goblin of the task at hand.

"Right this way, sir." Said the Goblin, ushering him through the door. Harry thought he saw a surprised look from the snake before he went through.

"Thank you, Claudham. You may go." Said a particularly wrinkled goblin who was gathering paper work at a desk.

"Well then, Mr.-" Silverhook stopped as he looked up at Harry. "My, my, most peculiar. I believe that we should get down to business. If I am correct, there may be more than your financial status that will be changing by this Will." Silverhook said, looking contemplative.

"What exactly do you mean by that Mr. Silverhook? Asked Harry. He was really starting to get irritated at everybody, and seemingly everything knowing more about him than he did himself.

"Please, no formalities. I am Silverhook. And I assume you are asking about the comment about your status changing? Yes, well I was told by my brother, Griphook, that you had a most peculiar aura. While it resembled that of a Potter, he could sense the Black and Silver that I now see. Tell me, have you experienced any sudden surges, magical and emotional? During the Department of Mysteries episode perhaps?"

"Yes, I have as a matter of fact. I was possessed by Voldemort and was able to successfully push him out of my mind." Harry said, suppressing a wince at the memory.

"You were possessed by the Dark Lord? And you pushed him out?" The Goblin asked slowly, with an eyebrow raised. "Yes, well I suppose that would do it." Silverhook said to himself more than Harry. "Well, lets get to it, shall we? I will explain more thoroughly if it is not adequately answered by the departed. A simple blood test will prove my suspicions if he is somehow not aware..." Silverhook said the last part to himself.

Shaking his head out of his musings, he opened a drawer and pulled out a small cylinder with the same crest on it as the door did. Setting it on top of the table, it opened to look like a flashlight with a satellite looking dish on the top of it.

"Begin." Commanded Silverhook. Slowly a silvery mist began to float around until it solidified into a replica of a miniature silvery Sirius Black holding a piece of paper, facing Silverhook.

"Shit." Was his first word. "This is not good. I'm dead, aren't I? Well obviously I'm dead if Silverhook is the size of a giant. If this will is being used, then I never told him. If I had, I would have updated, wouldn't I?" Sirius began mumbling and pacing, trying to figure something out while never actually moving his position, completely ignoring Silverhook and Harry, who he had yet to notice. Harry, meanwhile was trying to keep his heart in his chest. However well he was dealing with the loss of Sirius, he was not prepared for this. A seemingly real echo of the man.



“Mr. Black, if you would, please.” Silverhook prodded, just a bit impatiently.

“Huh? Oh, yeah. Is this a public reading, or private?” Sirius asked.

“Private, Mr. Black. For your heir, I believe if my guess is not of the mark.”

It was at this time that Sirius turned around and saw Harry. A flash of intense emotion passed across his face before a single, pearly white tear traveled down his silvery cheek.

“Hey pup, sorry I died on ya’ like that. How did I go anyway?” he asked somberly. A tone not usually associated with Sirius.

“Protecting me, and having a bit too much fun with Bellatrix.” Harry replied with as even a voice as he could muster.

“Damn, I am really sorry pup. I never could take a duel seriously. You look different. This wasn’t supposed to happen. Not yet, not after I died. Man, this is a mess. Maybe I should explain? Yeah, I’ll do that. I apologize if this is a little blunt, but I never was one to be eloquent. Ah, hell. Harry, James Potter was not your father. I am, or was. Merlin, I hate tenses. Before you freak out on me, allow me to explain the situation. James was impotent. He lost the ability to have children during a Death Eater attack late in our seventh year at Hogwarts. After James and your mum were married for a few months they came to me. They asked if they could use my DNA to help them along with their matters. Being the friend that I am, I agreed. They told me that there was a ritual that Lily had created that would combine my DNA and magic with James’s magic, and then impregnate Lily. When you were born, you looked just like me, with a little of Lily in you especially the eyes. Male Blacks always have grey or silver eyes, but not you. Lily must have been stronger than we all thought for that to happen. You were then placed under a charm, also devised by Lily, which would give you James’s image. That is why you only ever looked like James, except the eyes. You are a Black by blood, a Potter by right.” Sirius finished.

OooooooooooooooooooooooooooooO

End Chapter

Alright, hope that you enjoyed the chapter.

For the random guy (an anonymous reviewer) who reviewed on 2006-01-02 and said

“sirius said that the spell mixed his and james' blood so wouldn't that make harry james son by blood and right and sirius' son by blood and right, yet you stated that sirius by blood only and james right only and that just doesn't add up”

Alright, if you would scroll up maybe a paragraph, you will see that it says Sirius's blood and magic was mixed with James' magic, not his blood. So he would be Sirius' biological son, but because of the ritual, James' magic was added in, making him a Potter by magic right. If this still doesn't make sense, post the question in my forum, I'll get to.

## Chapter 4: Grim Explanations

Harry just sat there frozen for a moment. Then his brain began to process this new information.

Harry just sat there. He couldn't believe it. Sirius was his father, or used to be. Or something, but the fact still remained. 'Sirius is my father. Why the hell didn't he tell me! All this time I could have had a father, a family. But I guess there was the small matter of him being in prison for 12 years, and wanted for several murders, plus breaking out of jail probably didn't help matters either. But he still could have told me. Merlin, why does it always happen to me? I know, I'll be subtle'

"Why didn't you tell me!" Harry demanded.

"I don't think I will ever be able to tell you enough, pup. I am so sorry. None of this was supposed to happen, like it apparently did. Dumbledore never knew, and I wanted to keep it that way. I saw his manipulations, and I wanted nothing more than to claim you and leave the country, the war. I planned on telling you in private, this summer, so you could choose your path. While you had the Black family magic, and mind, it was locked away. This way, no one would dispute you to not be a Potter. This included some mannerisms and abilities that most of the blacks possess. You would still be my son, if you would have me as a father, but you would continue the Potter line, not the Black line. But, if you had chosen to do so, I could have unlocked that part of you. It would have been painful as hell, but you would feel more whole, having received your familial traits and abilities." Sirius explained.

"Why couldn't you tell me sooner? And what do you mean by the Black family traits and abilities? Harry asked

But before Sirius could answer, Silverhook interrupted. "Sirs, I would like to remind you that as you are an echo, you can be placed in a portrait. I believe that you have several in your family vault, and a new frame has been created and placed there." Silverhook informed them, slightly annoyed that they were straying away from business.

“Right, of course Silverhook. I can tell you everything once we leave. But first let me tell you this. Since you were unlocked, however that happened (and I expect a full explanation), you cannot be a Potter any longer in name. As far as your blood goes, Harry James Potter never existed, Seraph Orion Black is who you truly are. The Black Angel of Orion. Are you okay with that?” seeing Harry- sorry, Seraph’s hesitant nod he continued. “Okay, here we go.”

“I Sirius Orion Black, familial nomen ‘The Black Dog of Orion’, being of relatively sound mind and body, do here by name Harry James Potter, henceforth known as Seraph Orion Black, familial nomen ‘The Black Angel of Orion’ as my Heir by blood right and Head of the Black Family. As vessel of the Potter family, I name my heir, Seraph Orion Black, Heir of Potter Family by right of Magic. I also ask that the family motto be changed to something more fitting. By blood, by right, by magic, so it is spoken, so mote it be.”

And with that a brilliant flash of black and silver light filled the room. Harry could feel the magic tingling across his skin and over his face. Then the tingling became a sting, and then a biting sensation gripped him across the forehead. Then, as soon as it came, it left.

“What the hell was that?” a disorientated Seraph asked. (A/N: Harry will now be known as Seraph. As was explained, Harry James Potter never technically existed.)

“The last remnant of your mothers charm was just removed. You don’t have any physical similarity to James Potter any longer. As for why it hurt so much, I am sorry, for I do not know.” Answered Silverhook. “But, I can tell you of your status as the head of the Blacks though. Lets see here...” Silverhook began looking through papers on his desk. “First of all, as a head of a family, you are seen as a legal adult. Full responsibilities and privileges, you get the idea. You, as a Heir of the Potter line are the Head of that family as well. Would you like to combine the two? It would make things much easier. The two lines would simply merge finances and vaults, and if I am correct, you carry both the Black family magic, as well as the Potters, this would be best, as all your descendants will also have this magic.”

“Yes, I would like to do that. As head of the family, I can disown members of the Family and recognize those who were previously disowned, correct?” Seraph asked, a plan forming in his head. ‘This will be an interesting way to alert the Order of a new player in the game.’

“Yes you can. Claudham!” Silverhook suddenly yelled. A moment later a Goblin came in. “Claudham, bring me the Potter finances. It seems as if the Black Family has grown. Mr. Black, I have here the Black Family finances. Stocks, properties, businesses owned; magical and muggle, vault accounts; physical and liquid assets are listed. Ah, and the Family ring. The Potter ring will be absorbed once both are on your hand, into one. This signifies the merging of the line.” Silverhook told Seraph’s, as he handed him the ring. Once he put it on, it glowed silver for a moment, before settling to fit him. The ring was the same as the crest on the door. The snake looked, around but did not speak before settling around the Grim’s neck. The Grim looked at him for a moment then bowed its head.

“And here are the Potter finances; you may look at them at your leisure. You will have a copy of both in the Black Vault, which has just been enlarged to hold all of your assets that were being held. You are a very rich man, Mr. Black. You have just become one of our wealthiest customers.”

“Just how much money do I have now?” Seraph asked.

“Let’s see, with the merger, minus transfer charge and what has already been willed away by your father, you have close to ten billion Galleons.” Silverhook told Seraph, who now looked utterly flabbergasted.

“Well,” he said. “That’s a bit.” Seraph felt a bit odd being referred to as Sirius’s son, and as Mr. Black. ‘Well, I suppose I had better get used to it. It’s not bad, actually. I kind of like it. It will take some getting used to though.’

“Quite.” Was all the Goblin said, with a toothy grin that would give children nightmares. “Here is the Potter ring, once the rings are merged, you can visit your vault. Once there we can duplicate your

father's echo and place it in a portrait. You can then take it with you. It will not be activated while shrunken, so you will have to state your station to it and pronounce 'Activate' to activate it. This will work for all Family portraits." The Goblin explained as he handed the Potter ring to him.

Both rings glowed for a moment. An image of their respected animals appeared above the rings. The Lion of the Potter ring bowed low to the Grim of the Black ring before being sucked into the Grim. The large, bear-like dog grinned in an odd, lopsided manner that still was able to make it look feral, before bowing to Seraph.

"It is complete, master Black. The line of the Lion gives us courage to do what is needed. Never more will a Black fear an opponent, as we have before. But we will not run blindly like the Lions once did. They will learn, master, to never slight a Black."

"Yes, I quit agree. No one provokes me with impunity, a quote from a man who wrote the book on revenge. I do believe I have just found our Family motto, thank you. Also, how is it that I can speak to you?"

"There have only been a few since the first Master Black that have been able to speak directly to me. Usually they can speak to canines and also Grims. It is a unique ability of Blacks, and gift to the Guild, much like parseltongue to the Slytherin line, which you also seem to possess. All male Blacks have the ability; you can generally always speak the tongue of your animagus form, and they have always been a grim or similar large canine like animal since the beginning. To be able to speak to me signifies that you are, or will be a very powerful Wizard. Only Blacks who can turn into a true grim, like the ones created by the founders of the Black Line can speak to me. You will understand more once your father's portrait finishes his explanation." The Grim on his ring told him.

"Seraph, what the hell was that? I knew you would be able to speak to dogs, like I could, but not that. No one has been able to talk to that ring since my Great-Great-Grandfather Phineas. You must have some great potential pup, use it well." Sirius told him with pride.

"I will, Dad. I promise. Silverhook, I want to recognize the Andromeda Tonks Nymphrodora Tonks family as part of the Black family by blood and Ted Tonks by marriage. What can I do to Bellatrix Lestrangle and Narcissa Malfoy?" Seraph asked Silverhook.

"You can disown them, or dissolve their marriages and make them your wards. With them disowned, they will not be able to access the Black Family Vault or receive their stipends. If you make them wards, you will have to provide for them, as technically they will not be able to use magic, as they would no longer have 'Adult' status." Silverhook told him.

"What will happen to Draco Malfoy?" Seraph asked, remembering that Malfoy would also be a Black in a way.

"That depends on who he would choose to stay with, his mother or his father. But generally an heir would stay with their father, as is custom, to take over the family. Should he choose to stay with his mother, he would most likely be disowned, as his mother would be disgraced in the eyes of many."

"Okay, I would like to disown them both. Having them under my care sounds like too much responsibility with what I have planned."

"Very well, sir. There is still the matter of the motto that the late Mr. Black wished to be changed."

"Yes, I have thought of one. 'Nemo me impune lacessit' No one provokes me with impunity. I believe it is fitting."

"Yes, I quit agree. Mr. Black, Mr. Black, we best be on our way. Mr. Black Sr., you will have to be deactivated and then duplicated once down in the vault." Silverhook informed Sirius.

"All right, pick me up pup, let's go." Sirius told Seraph as they began to filter out of the office.

Making their way down the hall, Seraph saw Bill Weasley coming out of an adjacent hallway. 'I can't let him recognize me. I may look different, but my scar stands out like a neon light.' Seraph felt a

tingling sensation on his scalp at the thought of not being recognized. He felt his hair slowly lengthening until the front nearly covered his face. Bill passed by him without a second glance.

“What was that? Am I a metamorphmagus?” Seraph asked his father.

“Yes, actually. All Blacks are, to an extent. I can only change my hair length, and my beard. Its part of the history lesson I plan on giving you. You may not be able to remove the scar, but I bet you can move it to somewhere less visible. Just concentrate on what you want done.”

“Okay, here we go.” Seraph said, while concentrating on making the scar move to the side of his ribs. He figured if anyone did see it, he could tell them that he got it in an accident of some sort. Again, he felt the tingling sensation, but this time it moved down his face, his neck, along his back, and to his side where it settled. “Man that was weird. Now about the hair.” The tingling in his scalp could be felt again as he shortened his hair to how it was before coming to Gringotts.

“Much better, Mr. Black. Here are the carts, Snipemere will be taking you down today. Good day sir.” And with that Silverhook left.

As they got into the carts Seraph asked Sirius what he was going to explain in the office.

“Yeah, sure pup. I’ll tell you about the traits later.” Sirius began as they descended into the depths of Gringotts. “As for why tell you this summer? Well, that’s because for a Black, 16 is a right of passage. Back when there were witch hunts going on, if you made it to the age of 16, you were worthy of gaining the right to choose your own path. On the eve of your 16th, you will go into a trance. You will meet the founders of the Family there. I don’t know how they can do it, don’t ask. They are the reason I know what I do of the Black family. Once there, you can choose your path. Generally it is just dark or light, but there have been a few balanced Blacks before. The choice has nothing to do with being ‘good’ or ‘evil’ though. Your choice dictates how well you can use certain magic. Some families like the Potters, could never cast a correct Cruciatus Curse, though a few have tried in anger. A Black, lets say, would have trouble casting a love based



spell. It's not that you can't cast 'Dark' or 'Light' spells, just one or the other will be easier for you. A balanced, or Grey Wizard, are still usually seen as 'Dark' in the eyes of many because of the use of 'dark' spells. But they are actually stronger than both, being able to utilize both magics. Not many can understand the difference between 'dark' and 'evil', besides those who are 'dark' or 'evil'. 'Light Magic' is more or less strictly based on emotion and power, while 'Dark Magic' is magic based on intention and power." Sirius explained as they stopped in front of a large door with the Black Family Crest on it.

"Who dares attempt entry to the Most Noble and Ancient Vault of Black?" demanded a massive Grim in a menacing growl to any body who heard it, except Seraph, who heard only English. "Ah, Master Black. I have been expecting to see you."

"Yesss, the Black that can ssspeak to serpentsss. Your coming hasss been foretold. I do believe that you are the firssst Black since the initial Master Black to be able to ssspeak to me. A suure sign that you are the Masssters chosen Heir, ass there have been none before you. Though there wasss one of the descendants of the Guild who demanded entrance from me. . . the ignorant fool attempted to force his way in. . . Now he will never get into his ancestral vault. He should have look further than a family name before trying take what was not his." The black and silver serpent hissed a laugh.

"What are you speaking of, how was I foretold? What Guild, and who would try to demand entrance from a snake...wait, Riddle tried to get into the Black Family Vault, why?" Seraph asked the Serpent.

"You do not yet know of the Guild? Yesss, I suppossse you would not. That will be remedied sssoon, ass it iss for your father to tell you, if he iss able. I will ansswer your question though. The Grimsss Guild was a group of thieves and assassins in the early history of magic, sometime after the disappearance of Merlin. They created many of the ssstealth and subterfuge techniques used today. Slytherin was a Lesser Massster in the Guild hierarchy, a sssystem of laws and talentsss devised by the Guilds Master and Founder; Knox, the father of the first Blacks. These lawsss were passed in blood, binding any and all who signed, and there dessscendants thereafter, to never lie, steal, or betray one another. This may not sound like a great many

laws, but this wasss to a group of thieves and assassins, it was enough, and it kept order. When the Slytherin heir demanded entrance, he broke a blood law of brotherhood. The penalty should have been death, but as he did not gain entrance, his vaults were taken by the ancient magic, and given to you by the right of Blood Retribution.”

“That is interesting. So I have the Slytherin Vault because Riddle tried to steal from the Black Vault? When did this happen, and do you know what he wanted from inside?” Seraph asked.

“I believe that it happened close to fifty years ago. He was a young man when he came to me. All of the ancient writings and texts on rituals of every kind created by the Grims Guild are stored here. It was all for naught however. Only a true Grimtongue may access these tomes, and the most valuable and powerful texts are protected by parseltongue guardians put there by the First Black. Only you, since the Initial Master will have access to theses writings, as no Black before you has this ability. That is how you were foretold. A prophecy is written within a text, and told to me from the Master, telling of the coming of a True Grim, touched by the Serpent who would bring retribution and the old guild back, the child who would speak to both Guardians of Black and Silver.” Serpent Guardian finished.

“Great,” Seraph mumbled. “I have another prophecy on my head. I’ll have to find it to see what it says though.” A little louder, “Snipemere, would you please combine the Slytherin Ancestral Vault to the Black’s? It seems that Riddle lost his vault to me by trying to steal from the Blacks after he graduated from Hogwarts. By Blood Retribution Law, his vault is mine”

(A/N: “this is Grimtongue” “this is parseltongue” for now on. Onward with the story)

“Most Noble and Ancient Grim, open to me the Ancestral Vault.”

“As you wish...” the Grim said, as the door opened with a loud booming noise. A billowing cloud of grey dust dispersed, nearly choking Seraph. When the dust cleared, Seraph could barely hear his

father saying; “Welcome, to the Most Noble and Ancient Vault of Black.”

[illegible]

Chapter is done, hope you enjoyed it. Review, anonymous reviews are accepted. They help me to know if you like it or not. Thanks

# Omnis Potens

## Chapter 5: Black History

“Grimtongue”

“Parseltongue”

‘Thoughts’

books/ letters/ emphasis

The vault was massive. Easily the size of the Great Hall at Hogwarts. The Canis Minor, Major, and Orion constellations dotted the ceiling, creating a night sky while the vault was fully lit. Black marble lined the floor, laid with such care and skill that it looked as if it was cut from a single carved piece of marble. Most of the walls were lined with vast filling cabinets, which upon closer inspection, Seraph was able to see them clearly marked.

‘Diamond, Ruby, Onyx, Amethyst, Emerald, Sapphire,’ he read in his mind. lustrous to dull, cut and uncut, ores and minerals of every kind in existence apparently. It was all there. To the side close to the entrance there were three especially large cabinets marked ‘Galleons, Sickles, and Knuts’ near the handle.

Towards the middle of the vault was what could only be described as the most luxuries sitting space Seraph had ever seen. Softened Dragon hide leather recliners and sofas, upholstered with what looked like pure silver. All sitting on extremely plush silvery-grey carpet that appeared to be Demiguise hair. In the center of the sitting area stood a simple wood podium, on which sat a large, ancient leather bound book with peeling silver letters reading ‘Reference’.

Past the Sitting area was what looked like a vast library, two stories high, sectioned off by subject, difficulty, and age. Most of these tomes must have been several hundred years old, but they looked brand new, down to the oil on the spines. Further back was a door guarded by a Grim effigy, looking menacing as ever, but slightly playful at the sight of an Heir, most likely protecting the ritual texts from anyone but the Head of the family.

Opposite the library was what resembled a jewelry store. Silver cases covered with glass held a multitude of items, mostly feminine in nature, ranging from broaches to rings to pins and necklaces. Each had a name of who created it, why, who it was for and what it did, even if it had nothing more than a permanent luster enchantment on it. Ancient, modern and everything in between was included.

Next to the jewelry, in a small grotto that reminded Seraph of a blacksmiths' workshop with a blazing hearth in the center of it, giving a fiery glow to all of the surrounding weapons and armor. Like the jewelry, you could find every shape and size of weapon, in any grade and step of completion. Seraph felt a pull for a moment, then another, but he ignored them for the moment, choosing instead to look at another corner of the vault.

A myriad of items laid in this corner, in boxes, on boxes, on top or in trunks, some just floating, apparently by their own power. Furniture was strewn here and there with beautifully crafted trunks out of what else? Black and silver. 'I may have to see what I can find here. This will save me some time in Diagon Alley if I can find readily available items here.' Seraph thought. Above the items, on the wall were several sleeping portraits and one empty one. He did not want to wake any of them, incase they took to strangers as well as Mrs. Black, his grandmother, he now realized, had.

"Sirs, I will need to deactivate the senior Black in a moment, I will be back with the proper materials shortly." Snipemere informed them and presently left.

"Okay pop's, what's going on? What is the Grims Guild, how did they create Grims, and why was the 'Father of the First Black', not a Black? Seraph asked his father.

"They told you a bit, didn't they? Okay, let's start with the question you were asking me in the office. The old families have certain traits, skills, and powers affiliated to them. While other people may learn and develop these skills, and some can even be born with a power certain families are known to have, they will never have the same level of the power or be as good in the skill as the one who was born from a line who created them.

The Potters are extremely strong in defensive type magic. No one is able to compare to the wards that a Potter can build. In fact, most defensive wards in existence were created by a Potter at one time or another. The Fidelius Charm was one of their greatest accomplishment, and as we have seen, their greatest downfall as well. Potters are usually the epitome of Gryffindors, who else, besides Hufflepuffs would build a ward hinging on trust? The Potters are rumored to have been given their skills by Gryffindor himself before he passed away without an heir. When I said the epitome of Gryffindors, I meant it. A Potter would never do something that would harm somebody if they could not avoid it, though they were always ready to defend the honor of somebody, even someone they did not know. Too noble I suppose. It is said that a Potter would lose his life before hitting an opponent from behind. And several did. There have been a few black cats among the lions though. The Potters hushed it up a few hundred years back though. I only know because James told me. They got along well with just about everyone, except those from Slytherin, or any one ever seen associating with something they termed 'Dark'. They were like the Weasley's in that respect.

The Blacks, while just as ancient as the name suggests, do not come from as Noble a background then they would like others to believe. The first Black was actually the child of a Guild, not a family. The Guild would today be considered a type of Mafia. The 'Grims Guild', of what you have probably heard, were a Thieves and Assassins Guild, dedicated to their jobs unlike anybody had seen before, and business was good during the Middle Ages. When the Guild's Master decided he needed an heir, he gathered his most trusted and powerful associates together. He told them that he would create a ritual that would give his heir all of the group's skills and powers and lock them within the blood so all descendants would receive some form of the original skills. In return, he would give their heirs certain abilities that would pass down through their blood in the same way his heir's would. This would create a true master of the craft. When their heirs were born, they performed the rituals perfectly, and with these new magics, they were given new names to cement the act.

The children were not to be given names until displaying a trait inherited by the ritual. The names of all of the families were never

written down, in order to protect them, as this type of magic was considered a terrible act, and if too many found out of this ritual, the children would have been hunted down and destroyed. The child of Knox was given the name 'Black' for his ability to blend into the shadows, as well as his raven colored hair which seemed to suck in surrounding light. The name 'Meissa' for his shining silver eyes. 'Orion' was given as the constellation under which he was born. Meissa Orion Black, The Black Star of Orion. Many Blacks are given Orion as a middle name in remembrance of the first true Black.

Usually after the 16th birthday you are made to perform a ritual that shows you what skills and powers you have inherited so that you can train them. I was unable to do this as after my Choice, I left the house and got blasted off the family tapestry for my troubles. I never went back. Only the Blacks, as far as I know, have the ritual. More families may have a copy of the artifact, or something similar, but we don't ask, they don't tell. It is actually one of the only rituals that can be accessed by any Black, as it is not guarded by old Sentinel there." Sirius finished his history lesson, looking towards the Grim gargoyle.

"And the creation of the Grims?"

"Oh yeah. The actual Grims were created as protectors by the Guild for Meissa Black and later for reconnaissance when he was older. They are thought to be mythical creatures in the magical world because they will only obey a true Grimtongue, even if a Black speaks to them. My Grandfather Phineas' portrait once told me that some puppies were kept in a time binding enchantment after they were born to be companions for other Grimtongues. As far as I know, the knowledge of how they were created was lost several centuries ago.

"So the Potters created the Fidelius Charm, which killed James and my mum because of that traitor Wormtail, and the Blacks were originally head of an assassin's guild in the Middle Ages? Who used some highly taboo rituals to create new family lines? And somehow made Grims as companions and protectors for Grimtongues? Is that right?" Seraph asked, still absorbing the information.

“Yep, pup. In a nutshell. That Snippy or Snipesmere Goblin is back. I’ll talk to you after you reactivate me. See ya.”

Sirius said as the Goblin began chanting. The silvery mass that was Sirius began to turn into mist again. It turned into a swirling vortex for a moment, before being split in two. One mist was sucked into a portrait which was then shrunken to look like a thick 8’ x ’10 photograph and frame, the other sunk back into the flashlight like projector, to be used for the public will reading. Seraph picked up the frame and carried it with him to the ‘Reference’.

“Okay, lets see what you do.” Seraph said aloud as he opened the book. It was blank. “Come on...lets try this... What do you do?” he asked the book, not really expecting the book to answer him.

I am the Reference book for the Black Vault. You can easily search for items based on attributes, type, etc. You can also place any item onto the blank page and I can identify it for you.

The book told him. ‘Creepy, like Riddle’s diary, only I can talk to it. This will make looking for something much easier. I wonder how they came up with this. “Okay, I need a trunk.” Suddenly a list showed up on the blank page. Sorcerer’s Trunks, Travel Trunks, Prison Trunks, Storage Trunks, Shrinking, exploding, custom, fake, you name it, they had a trunk for it. ‘Lets see what custom trunks are.’

“Custom Trunks” he commanded. Another list appeared, but only one trunk was shown, simply called ‘Custom Trunk’. ‘Okay, more specific, ah I know...’

“Show Information”.

Black Custom Trunk. Created shortly after the founding of the Family, this trunk can only be used by a speaker of true Grimtongue. Black Iron wood with Silver finishing, this trunk can have as many storage spaces as needed, barring it does not surpass the usable amount of space. At one compartment the space is 100x larger then a regular compartment. Every compartment after will either be half of that space, or a specified size. Currently a nine compartment trunk. Including four regular size compartments, a library, potions lab,



bedroom, and study with a ritual chamber. Shrinkable, light weight. Can be turned into a ring if desired. Simply command it so. New user should allow three drops of blood to set on the star in ring form. This will confirm new ownership and ensure that it is not stolen. Cannot be used by anyone but the current owner unless specified.

“Well that could be useful. Now how do I get it?” His question was answered a moment later by the arrival of said trunk materializing in ring form in front of him. If you did not know it was made of wood, you would think that it was some blackened metal. The grain of the wood was seen as the silver accents with a silver star fitted on top. ‘Lets see here, ah. That will work.’ He thought as he nipped his finger on the edge of the star. Letting three drops hit the star in succession, it glowed misty for a moment before forming to fit his finger. Taking it off, he sat it on the ground.

“Trunk.” He commanded. The ring began to spin rapidly as parts started to enlarge. ‘Reminds me of that cartoon character Dudley used to watch. Taz...something or other...’ When it stopped spinning, an exquisitely crafted trunk. Black, slightly oily looking Iron wood was furnished with silver fastenings. On top was the Orion constellation with the Meissa star particularly large. Surrounding the star were roman numerals up to IX. Turning the notched star end toward the I, he opened the first compartment. Nothing was in there. Nor the second or third compartments. The fourth compartment held a 8’ x 10’ picture and frame he now recognized as a deactivated portrait.

The man looked to be close to Dumbledore’s age with dark grey hair that must have been black as night during his younger years with a slightly Asian look about him, not what he was expecting from a family who’s ancestry occurred in England. The most distinguishing feature, however, was the man’s shining silver eyes. Even deactivated, they seemed to pulse with knowledge and power. He placed the portrait of his father next to this man and decided that he would find out who it was when ever he could.

The ritual chamber was a sinister looking stone room with runes scattered about and a pentagram in the dead center. The potions lab was well lit and clean, though it lacked many modern potions ingredients. The library, while huge, did not seem to have enough

books to fill it. The bedroom and study, however, were as luxurious as the sitting room in the center of the Vault. Leaving, he commanded the trunk back into a ring.

“That is beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. No one would ever think this as a trunk. It can’t be taken by anyone but me, and only a true Grimtongue can use it at all. Awesome. Looks like I won’t have to go to a trunk store, though I will be checking out the books here and at some bookstores. An apothecary too.” He said to himself as he started looking around, heading towards the jewelry. Passing some of the items, he realized that not all of them were jewelry. ‘These must be the artifacts Dad was talking about. Lets see... Black Stone of ability... that’s what I need. He said that it was used after their 16th birthday, once they received their abilities. But I already have some unlocked, might as well try it.’

Picking up the round ball of onyx with veins of white marble, he noticed how light it was compared to how it looked. ‘Okay, now what?’ he thought after a moment. Just as he was about to put the black orb down, it stuck to his hand. Seraph felt a sting like a needle, and then blood being drawn from his palm. The orb glowed and heated up as the white marble veins turned blood red. Once it stopped glowing and turned cool once more, a piece of parchment appeared in the air within arms reach.

“That was interesting, lets see what we have here...”

Name: Seraph Orion Black

Familial Nomen: Black Angel of Orion

Right of Choice: Pending

Abilities

Aura Reading/Scanning

Statue: Unlocked

Description: Aura reading or scanning is the ability to see others power levels and emotions. Colors vary from person to person, but most stay to their family colors, though no one is quite sure why or how this happens. Auras are measured in their power by the depth or richness of color and how many different colored strands they possess. For example, a wizard or witch with a deep colored aura with multi-colored strands would be magically weaker than someone with a light aura and solid, one color strands. Emotions are seen as an outline of the aura. Every scanner sees emotion differently, so it is difficult to generalize what a color signifies. But most agree that red is seen as angry or passionate, variants of yellow indicate sickness or nervousness, and a murky green indicates maliciousness or general ill will. All scanners are slightly empathic, so try to associate what feeling you get from someone to what the color is. Advanced uses can manipulate the gift to show a light above the auras of others to show power in relation to their own, darker being more powerful, lighter being less powerful. This is useful in a duel when studying an aura is a distraction.

### Mind of Understanding

Status: Unlocked

Description: The Mind of Understanding is an ability that allows for quick comprehension and easy learning. Allows one to think clearly and objectively. Rowena Ravenclaw is said to have been the most gifted with this ability than anyone in history.

### Focus/Assassins Mind

Status: Unlocked, currently inactivated

Description: Focus, or the Assassins Mind, is the ability of awareness and speed in a threatening situation. Those who have the ability describe it as the world slowing down, their movements precise and deadly, and their minds clear and cold. Once trained, a master can use this at anytime for an advantage in many situations.

Shift-

“Sir.” Snipemere interrupted. “Sir, I would remind you of any previous engagements you might have.” The Goblin offered hesitantly. ‘More like hurry up; I’ve got better things to do’ Seraph thought.

“What time is it at the moment?” Seraph asked pleasantly.

“It is of this moment, 12:54 and 31, no 32 seconds.” The Goblin informed him, not looking at any device or apparatus. ‘Must learn to do that.’ Seraph thought to himself.

“Then I have no previous engagements.” He told Snipemere, with the same lopsided, slightly feral grin that the Family ring had shown. ‘I’ll look at these later. I do have other things to do today.’ Seraph thought as he headed over to the sitting area to pick up the reference book, which was surprisingly light. He sat the book down near the armory.

“Weapons” he pronounced to the book.

Black family weapons transcend centuries and many forms from across the world. Walk past the weapons and pick up any that you feel a pull towards. These are the weapons most suited to you. Place them on the blank page to identify them.

“That was fairly straight forward. I like this book.”

Walking the same route that he had before, he felt the tug he had experienced the first time past. Looking up, he saw a long, blackened metal blade with a slight silver sharpened curve from the hilt to the tip. The handle had cloth covered grips in a cross lattice pattern. On one side of the blade was engraved a grim like dog, and the other held burning silver runes. You could almost feel the archaic aura of the weapon. When Seraph picked it up, and on impulse, slit his palm and covered the silver runes. The runes absorbed the blood and a black ethereal flame surrounded him. It burned for a moment, and then settled to move across his skin. The flame began to be absorbed and he felt a terrible pain in his head. When it was over, the blade sat in his hand, feeling like an extension of his arm. He didn’t know how, but he had just gained some knowledge of its use. Seraph could probably defend himself adequately, assuming his opponent didn’t know any

more than him. He placed it on the blank page of the 'Reference' book.

Black's Katana: The Japanese long sword. It is a slightly curved sword, with its convex edge sharpened, used since before the European Middle Ages. It was one of the weapons used by the Bushi class, especially the Samurai, but also ninja clans, feudal Japanese groups of spies and assassins who also used it together with a shorter sword called Wakizashi, or within ninja clans, a dagger like Wakizash, called a Tanto. The Katana has been endowed with a sacred element, since it comes from the work store of a member of the Shintoist priesthood. The two swords together are called Daisho (long and short), and were used by Samurai of all the ranks. Black's Katana is endowed with the sacred element of shadow. Deadly and silent, black flames appear during battle which enable it to cut through nearly anything. One half of the Black Daisho. Can be placed on the back or side. Once the blood ownership ritual is complete, it is impossible to steal or be used against the owner.

"Very fitting sir, if I may say so." Snipemere said to Seraph.

"How so, Snipemere?" he asked.

"Well sir, what is more fitting a dark angel of retribution then a flaming black sword?"

"I absolutely agree Snipemere." Seraph told the Goblin. 'I absolutely agree. I'll have to learn more about how to use this, and how exactly I know as much as I do about them. I think I know what the other pull was though.' He thought, picking up the accompanying scabbard and placing it near his side, where it strapped itself loosely on his left hip. 'Lets see if I am right...' he thought, looking for where he felt the second tug. 'Aha!' was the exclamation in his mind as he found what he was looking for. The dagger looked almost exactly like its counterpart, except being dagger length. The same impulse to spill his blood on the runes was felt, and he complied. This time the blade simply glowed a shadowy color instead of sprouting flames. The aura of the dagger was sucked into his skin and he felt the familiar pain in his head. The feeling of ease with this weapon was clear when he

began twirling it in his hands. He placed it on the page to see more about it.

Black Tanto: Like the Black Katana, the Tanto is an assassin's blade, though shorter for closer, more personal work. The element of the shadow is also endowed within the blade, and like the Black Katana, can be used effectively while shadow walking. Second half of the Black Daisho. Carried close to the Black Katana loosely.

Strapping it to his side where it automatically hung loosely to his hip above the Black Katana, he continued looking through the armor and robes that were scattered about the far side of the armory. While he saw many interesting ancient suits and some spell repellent mail, it was not what he was looking for, so he began to search among the books.

Again, while there was a wealth of knowledge within the pages, they were mostly just old and out-dated. 'There are probably more resent books at Grimmauld Place, but I don't want to alert them to my disappearance or what I am up to yet. But then again, they are keeping Harry Potter locked up, not Seraph Black. How am I going to handle this? I'll think about it later' were his thoughts, as he began to pick up a book on Occlumency, but then put it back. Anything this old would easily be public knowledge. If everyone has the same mind defenses, then someone could easily slip passed them. In the same token, it would also be easier to block a mind intrusion because they will know what to expect. He did pick up some on potions that looked useful, as well as some old dark arts beginners books and some archaic runes and enchantment books.

"Uhm...hows it go again? Oh yeah 'WHO GOES THERE!' demanded Sentinel, the guardian of the Grims Guild Texts. Seraph just stood there for a moment, wondering how something could appear intimidating and apprehensive at the same time.

"Oh, I guess you can't understand me. I had so hoped to speak to another too. I suppose that another will come along, they always do. Soon though, I hope. Even that sourpuss Phineas came to talk to me every so often. I suppose he's dead now though. They don't tell me much. I only guard some of the most illegal texts ever created! Not

like I have an important job or anything..." Sentinel rambled on, sounding a lot like a cartoon character he had heard once, not noticing Seraph trying to get his attention for some time.

"Sentinel!" Seraph finally yelled.

"Yes?" the statue asked dumbly. "Oh, so you do speak. Why didn't you say something? You will be wanting past hmmm? What is it that you wish to seek that is not for all eyes to see? Rituals? Enchantments? Those ever illegal potions that Phineas raved about?" the Grim guard asked very quickly.

"I seek knowledge of the Old Guild, and all useful texts to help me win a war against a evil hypocrite, a useless ministry, and an Old Man who has long passed his prime. I seek what you guard, oh wise and capable Sentinel." Laying it on thick for the seemingly depressed statue. 'Who made this thing anyway? An emotional guardian. I'll have to learn how to make these things, they could be fun.

"Yes sir!" The doorkeeper said with pride evident in his voice, as he puffed his chest out. A ridiculous feat for what was in all reality a gigantic stone dog. "History and many other things you will find within. Enter, sir, but do take heed of the serpent that guards the last gate." Sentinel warned.

"Don't worry, Sentinel old dog, he'll listen to me. I just have that serpentine charm." The statue looked highly confused at this pronouncement before stepping aside to let him in.

Inside it looked like the library outside, except for the huge slate door at the end, being guarded by a rather large slithering onyx and this time, sapphire stone snake, settled in between the doors ring-like handles. Against a far corner, away from the books inside what looked like a very ornate open kennel, rested what looked to be large germen shepherd like dogs with inky black hair and paws bigger than the biggest of Mastiffs.

"Those must be Grims." Seraph commented to no one.

"Yes that they are. And who might you be, I wonder." A painting Seraph hadn't noticed before said to him. "A Black, obviously. But green eyes. Remarkable and only a silver band around them. Truly powerful your mother must be. Or was, perhaps. Yes, your mind is an open book child. Such pain and that is from your eyes alone. You seek knowledge that can only be found here. I will help you. Just tell me why you seek such knowledge?" The portrait asked him, in a somberly slow monotone which reminded Seraph of a funeral procession.

"Like you said, my mind is an open book. I seek a way to defend it that will not be known by any other. I need anything that will help me gain power in a short amount of time." He told the portrait. "And exactly who are you?"

"Me, boy? Who are you is what I wonder. Who am I indeed. I am Aniston Orison Black!" Aniston announced, as if Seraph should have known from the beginning. Getting only a raised eyebrow in response, he continued. "Well, I suppose it has been to long since a true Grimtongue has been for me to be well know. I am librarian, so to speak, of these fine texts you see before you. What you ask is indeed here, and more. What is power to you though?" Aniston asked, the last part in a slightly cryptic tone.

"I see power as a means to an end. One must have it to do what must be done, or because others won't." he told the picture.

"Ah yes. An answer worthy of the first. There are those who see power as a means unto itself. Those are who don't deserve such power. I believe that is what you hope to defeat? How interesting, a Black who fights the evil power, yet does not see the world in the black and white that usually comes with such a position. A balanced wizard has not been seen in the Blacks for quit a while. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. You have not yet had the pleasure of meeting the council have you? Yes, yes. Now don't interrupt me..." the portrait told Seraph, who was trying to tell him to get on with it.

"Now let me concentrate. Runes, enchantments, and potions, oh my. Most of the rituals that can help you can be found here, but for some others you may need to search the Black Star's chamber for. Look to



the bookshelf, you will find all that you need. It is one of my 'services' to the family. Do return them at some point. If you die, they will return automatically, but there is a reason that they are kept from the rest of the world." Aniston finished. While the portrait was as interesting as Binns, he was able to listen to all he needed to know.

"Thank you." He said, as he made his way to a lone bookshelf, away from the others. A few books sat on the shelves, though not enough to effectively help him. He was just about to ask why there were so few books, when Aniston answered him.

"Look at the books. The title should tell you all you need to know. Whatever subject it is, will hold all of the knowledge held on all of these shelves that will help you. It is easier, I believe, then carrying a library with you. It will be ancient knowledge though, some far more effective than anything nowadays, but some are not as updated as they should be. You will have to bring more books here, to include them in the 'Master Books', otherwise they will have to be housed securely in your trunk and be read separately."

Looking through the books he saw simple, vague titles such as 'Rituals' or 'Potions'. 'Must be like he said then' Seraph thought, as he opened a page and saw a list of topics, not book titles.

"This will be helpful, thank you." Seraph told Aniston, as he put the books into the now enlarged trunk. Making his way to the slate door, he was stopped by a melodious, yet dangerous hiss fill his ears. 'A bit like a siren' he thought, shaking himself out of his stupor.

"You can stop that, you know." Seraph told the snake, annoyed at being taken in by a mind charm, even if faintly. The Serpent looked startled for a moment. Then it grinned, 'How in the hell does a snake grin?', in the same lopsided, slightly feral grin that the Family ring and Seraph possess.

"Ah, I see you have finally come. This is good. It is about time too. I have not been able to stretch in ages, and I have such a cramp! And I haven't had a good shed in ages. Come, I will meet you inside." The snake told him, in an obviously female voice. She slithered through a moving hole next to the ring handles. Opening the doors, Seraph was

met by a relatively another extravagant sitting room, though this seemed to be more homely, with deep emerald colored carpet, instead of black. The furniture was the same Dragon Hide the others were, but softer. It was a small private library with a charmed window showing Hogwarts of all places with the Dark Forest in the background. A mighty, full sized grim sat looking at the lake, every so often fading away and appearing somewhere else. It was on one of the larger couches that Seraph found the snake lounging.

“It has been so long since I have seen, or felt these couches. Do you mind if I stay in here sometimes? I do so enjoy small comforts. You are the only other since my master to have been here. You seek truly powerful knowledge, do you not?” She asked.

“Yes, I was told that only the most valuable of information would be held in your protection. Tell me though, you are stone, so how is it that you are able to feel? The Grim, Sentinel also felt emotion, and you say that you can feel pain? Or shed for that matter. What are you exactly? And who are you?” Seraph asked, wondering how stone could have a shed, or cramp. Was it alive?

“Me? I am Nashira, thank you for asking.” Nashira said softly, seemingly lost in thought. She suddenly shook her head, coming back to the question. “Cramp? Yes I can feel, to a certain extent, emotions too. The pathetic mutt is just a cry baby. As to why I or the mutt shed, I couldn’t tell you. The knowledge to make guardians is kept here though. All you will have to do is look. Within this study, you will find what you seek. The master’s journals are also held here, if you are interested. They cover not only his life, but what he knew of his Father’s also. The Guild’s laws are also here, blood or otherwise. Like with the other Black collection, there are ‘Master Books’ that hold the information on the subjects. They are over there.” She told him, pointing her head to a large desk that Seraph could have sworn was not there before.

On the desk were several more books to add to his collection, those these too were vague. ‘Advanced Black Rituals’, ‘Advanced Black Potions’, ‘Advanced Enchantments and Animation’, there was also a book that would solve part of his problems. ‘Black’s Guide to Mind Shrouding and Infiltration: Occlumency and Legilimency’ was the title

of the book. Opening the potions book, the first subject he saw was a Permanent Bone Removing potion that made the poly-juice look like a simple warming draught. 'I guess Advanced really means advanced. This just might be what I need.' He thought as he also put these in his trunk.

"Thank you Nashira. I will be back when I need anything else." He told the Serpent as he left.

"Stop, young one. All who pass through here are worthy of the Black companion. As it has been, as it will always be. Choose child." The portrait told him, in a near ceremonious voice, which, Seraph thought, could very well be. He walked over to the large kennel and stepped in. It was huge compared to the outside. For Grims typically being thought of as black and, well Grimmish, there were several varieties in different shades of darker colors. They all seemed to be asleep, some with paws on a toy, or bone, one was even hanging from the top of its cage by its paws, looking happy as can be, besides the whole cryogenically induced stupor they all seemed to be in. But one stood in the center, watching Seraph as he entered. Instead of German-Shepard like, he resembled more of a mammoth black Labrador.

"Ah, I see that another has the gift. It has been too long since one of my children have had a companion. I am glad to see you. What is your name, young master?" The canine asked him.

"I am Seraph Orion Black, and I was under the impression that all of the Grims were kept under a spell of some sort, yet you are not. Aniston told me to choose a companion, as was tradition, but I do not know how to go about this." Seraph informed the Grim.

"Ah, a Dark Angel of Orion. A fitting name, if your eyes and demeanor are anything to go by. You carry the pain of a fallen angel though it is receding. And the weapons are fitting, the First Master carried those same weapons. I am the first Grim, and these are all my children. I have lived long, and fathered many. As for how I have lived for so long, it is because it is my purpose. We Grims are companions and guardians. I protect my children, and make sure that if they do wake up before being chosen, they can leave. Those are wild Grims, what

the wizards believe to be fictitious, they guard graveyards and roads to fulfill their purpose to live on. They are under a strong time binding spell that will only be broken by the death of their intended, which is how some do wake up, or by being chosen. To choose one, simply relax and head towards any pull you feel, much like the weapons, though I hesitate to make such a reference.”

Nodding in understanding, Seraph began to walk around, letting his instincts take him where they would. A few minutes later, he felt something. A tug similar to that his weapons had done, but different at the same time. He stopped in front of a larger open cage. Inside was a puppy that was nearly the size of a fully grown, large Labrador. The dog was black as night, but auburn colored hair could be seen sparsely. If that didn't tell Seraph that this was his chosen, then the next thing did. The Grim puppy stood up, stretched in feline like manner, and opened its eyes. Emerald and silver eyes. His eyes. 'Well, I guess that answers that.' He thought.

“Hello, young one. I am Seraph. I will be your companion.” Seraph told the Grim, as it began to walk around.

“Hello master Seraph. Umm... I will be your companion and umm... protector! Yeah, that's what it was. I will be your companion and protector. Can we leave? I'm Cheleb, master Seraph sir.” Cheleb informed him just as quick as Sentinel had. Seraph laughed at the puppies impatience to leave his resting place.

“Just Seraph, or sir. We will both work on patience, it will be needed. Yes, we will be leaving soon to look for items that I will need. We are at war, Cheleb. I will need your help in information gathering, if you can handle that for me. I assume you will grow very quickly, we will be going to a new home shortly after today.”

“Yes sir!” Cheleb responded in a near military salute.

They walked back to the ancient grim to inform him of who had been chosen, and that they were leaving. Gomeisa, for that is what the Grims name was, bid them farewell. He said goodbye to Aniston and Sentinel on his way out and stopped before the Goblin Snipemere.

“Well sir, will we be on our way?” The Goblin asked, handing him a medium sized black velvet pouch. Snipmere informed him that it was a bottomless money bag that tied directly to his vault. All he had to do was add a couple drops of blood to the seal on the front, and it would be tied to him. Seraph nodded his acquiescence and performed the small ritual. Once back in the carts, Cheleb seemed to almost disappear when they dipped out of the light and into the darkness. His tongue could still be seen, a slight glowing pink in the void. An odd growling could be heard throughout Gringotts’ caverns, as the Grim screamed his happiness at the speed.

“We have much to do, Cheleb. Try not to bring too much attention to yourself. If I have any problems with the store owners, do you feel like changing their minds? The overly large lab gave him the same grin that seemed to run through the Black Family as they made their way to the place parents warned their children about from the age of understanding fear. Knocturn Alley.

All right. What do you think? Don’t expect many other chapters to be even this long, I just couldn’t end it. No ships in the foreseeable future. Not sure I could have done romance anyway. Remus and Tonks may hook up... For Seraph though, maybe sometime into the Hogwarts year. Don’t know. Rethinking where he should go. He has Potter, Black, and Slytherin finances and properties. He didn’t get to the Potter or Slytherin heirlooms, but he will at some point. You know what you like to read, and I have a good idea of what I want to write, but suggestions are welcome. Okay. Chapter done, may revise at some point. Hopefully there are not too many mistakes. I was informed that some of the mistakes were with words like there and their, or quit and quite. I’m bad with stuff like that. I apologize. Next chapter sometime soon, not sure.

I’m glad so many are reading the story, please review.

## Chapter 6: Order Meeting

During the past week, the Order of the Rubber Ducks had been busy organizing as well, today, Saturday, would be the first Order meeting of the summer.

“I call this meeting of the Order of the Phoenix to attention. With the increased activity of Voldemort’s Death Eaters, we must keep Harry unaware, and therefore less likely to act on impulse. Ron, Hermione, this means that there will be no letters this summer, as even the vague letters you sent to him last year did more harm than good.” Ron and Hermione nodded at this. Well, Hermione nodded, Ron rolled his eyes.

They had been inducted into the Order before Harry had been retrieved after their fourth year, though only Mrs. Weasley knew of it; the others were unaware until just before this meeting. It hadn’t gone over well, especially with Remus, who felt this as a serious betrayal to Harry. Ron had been disturbingly easy to convince him to spy on his ‘best mate’, he was offered prefect position and a guaranteed spot on the Gryffindor Quidditch team, though he would have done it just to be included in something that Harry wasn’t. He had been told after his first year by his mother to report anything odd with Harry, which she had then told Dumbledore, so it wasn’t a whole lot of change.

‘Merlin,’ Ron thought, ‘Money, fame, he’s more powerful than most of the kids in our year, and he could get any girl he wanted! Well, almost any girl...’ Ron smirked at that, remembering how he and Hermione had finally gotten together after the recovering from the Department of Mysteries.

Hermione, on the other hand, had been slightly more difficult to convince. Slightly. Dumbledore had convinced her that lying and betraying Harry’s trust was the only way to keep him safe. And coming from Dumbledore, it might as well have come from a burning bush, or Merlin himself, for the effect that it had. She had agreed, and had saved Ron from a few close calls when he was about to go off on Harry in one of his jealous fits. Why she had agreed to go out with him, she couldn’t quite understand herself. She just felt peaceful, like there wasn’t a care in the world, and slightly foggy around him. She

just assumed that she had fallen for Ron at some point. She had read, after all, that love was illogical and unpredictable, so she just went with it, besides, her books never lied to her. The thought that the Great and Powerful Oz- sorry, Dumbledore, at the wishes of one Ronald Weasley, had slipped a love binding draught into one of her healing potions never crossed her mind.

"I will need you to continue to keep tabs on Harry for me, like you have been, more so this year, if at all possible. He carries a lot of anger, and now I fear he will be extremely depressed at the loss of Sirius and become even more difficult than he was last year. I have informed him that he will be unable to leave his relatives house until the end of the summer, or risk the blood ward protection. The wards, however, will be fully charged when he has stayed within the house for two weeks, keeping his relatives, and Harry, while he is there, perfectly safe for the next year. If something happens to where he would have to be pulled out before the two weeks is up, the wards will have to be recast within a few hours, no more than 8, I believe, or they will fall within a few days. After the two weeks he can be safely removed, with no ill effects, although I want him to have proper grievance time. I will be screening any mail he has been sent, and will give him what passes my inspection on the first of September. Unfortunately, before I could put the screening words in place, a Gringotts owl made it to him. I informed Harry then of his inability to leave the house, with less specifics of course, and that I will be acting as his representative during the will reading on July the 13th. Tonks, Mundungus, you have been on guard duty this week. What news do you have to report, if any?" Dumbledore asked, though it was obviously a direct command.

"Notn' out o' ta' 'rdinary, cap'n. He bin stayn isside 'hic', isside 'hic', not out 'ter house yet. 'Is bird en' flyn 'round few a 'bit, bangin' the fetters of its seelf on sumfin before she coul get trough. Heees owlie got in sometimes later's though." 'Dung' Fletcher slurred his report, obviously drunk, and smelling quite literally like the shit he had been smoking. Tonks looked at him in disgust as she gave her report.

"Like Dung said, Harry has not come out of the house yet, and Hedwig was trying to get through whatever was up. I assume those were the 'Screening Wards' you mentioned?" seeing Dumbledore's

nod, she continued, trying to keep the anger out of her voice. "She looked pretty messed up by the time she got in. His family seems to have taken our threat seriously though, as we haven't heard too much from the house. His cousin is acting a bit seedy though. I heard him talking about 'getting the freak back', but I don't know what he meant by that. That's about it." She finished.

"Yes, yes. Thank you Mr. Fletcher, Nymphrodora. Hedwig was able to get through? That is truly amazing. Such loyalty in an owl is uncommon. She was not supposed to be able to get through, and I had already asked Mrs. Weasley to watch for her. Do we have-" but Dumbles was interrupted by a fuming werewolf, and while far from as along as Dung was, he was clearly inebriated.

"You were going to keep his owl from him? Without his knowledge, or his consent? Whether or not his 'family' is treating him well, you were planning on locking him up in that hell hole, the entire summer, with people with the same mentality as Snivulus over there." Remus pointed in the general direction of the aforementioned. "Damn bootlicker, if its not one, it's the other." He said the last part to himself, then remembering why he was talking at all, continued. "Leaving him without the only constant in his life? That bird is the only thing in his life that has never turned on him or wasn't there when he needed them. You weren't even going to notify him of these 'arrangements', were you? You sicken me Dumpslesmore, er Dimplespore, 'hic' Old Man! You are coming very close to losing your one contact to the Werewolf community. If it comes to it, I will choose Harry over this... shit. Bloody bastard... Oh, and ah, nice pants Tonks." Remus finished off-handedly, leaving a flabbergasted Order, a twinkle-less Dimplespore, er, Dumbledore, and a slightly confused and mildly blushing metamorphmagus.

"Get back here, you abomination! You do not speak that way to the Headmaster. You're just as bad as-" But Snape was stopped mid rant, this time by the hand of Dumbldore on his shoulder.

"Forgive him Severus; he is unbalanced at the moment. He has lost a good friend and the full-moon has just passed. Though, I do believe that he should be able to keep a tighter leash on his wolf. Otherwise he may be a danger..." Dumbledore trailed off, as Tonks got up with



the same look of disgust she used on Dung, only now directed at Dumbles, and walked away.

“Misery loves company, as they say. Alastor, and Kingsley, you two will be on a rotating guard shift for this week, starting tomorrow afternoon, instead of on Monday. Severus, what do you have to report?” Dumbledore asked, not sparing a second to the young women who just left.

“Yes, well now that the wolf and the tart have left, I can give my report. Actually, Headmaster, do you think it wise to include Potter’s ‘friends’, in this discussion? I believe the boy’s arrogance has rubbed off on the Weasley and Stupidity on Granger.” Hermione looked affronted at this comment, while Ron was busy looking down Hermione’s shirt, oblivious to anything but the orbs that were just out of his sight. “Yes Granger, stupidity. How you scraped that ‘O’ in potions is beyond me.” Snape continued. She brightened at the knowledge of her grade, but was still upset at ‘scraping’ for any grade. ‘Must study even more,’ she thought to herself, ‘N.E.W.T.’s are only two years away!’ Snape nearly gagged on the thoughts she was so carelessly projecting.

“No, Severus, I believe that they can handle what you have to report.” The Geriatric told him.

“Very well,” Snape said, with a small but evil glint in his eyes. Had anybody seen it, they probably would have preferred to leave, instead of hearing what ever it was he had to say. “There have been several attacks on muggles and a few wizard families; none have been too atrocious, relatively speaking, though there have been many deaths. Muggle blood is being used as the only food source for some of the prisoners that have been gathered. The Dark Lord believes that something so dirty will eventually kill the prisoners. Some of his pureblood prisoners, those who have failed him or refused an invitation to his ranks actually believe this and will do anything to not drink it, many opting instead the option of torture under ‘Crucio’.

None of these attacks, however, have been as extensive as the assault on the Finnegan’s. I have heard that they were all put under the Imperious and made to rape one another, the mother, muggle father, the Gryffindor, and two squib sisters, before having their body

parts systematically severed and reattached to someone else, or in the sisters case's together. They were dispatched with a variant of the 'Incendio' curse, burning slowly until there was nothing but ash left. This of course after they had been deemed 'no longer fun', as Rabaston Lestrangle put it, once their minds were past departed. Rabaston and his wife find euphoria in their insanity it seems. The Gryffindor was spared however, as a warning not to cross the Dark Lord. The boy will be joining the Longbottom's at St. Mungos with the majority of his mother's limbs. None of these attacks, however, were on the Dark Lords recent orders. He has not been seen since the Department of Mysteries event, nor has Bellatrix Lestrangle, coincidentally. It is my belief that the Dark Lord was more damaged then he would care to admit, and is being 'cared for' by Lestrangle." The greasy pathetic excuse for an academic reported.

Most of the order looked sick. Except for Dung, who had passed out sometime earlier, Ron, who had just looked up from his girlfriends shirt, as not to miss anything of course, Dumbledore, who looked as if nothing could bother him as usual though without the trade-mark twinkle, and Snape, who was getting a perverse pleasure out of watching all the others reactions.

"Thank you Severus, for your descriptive report. We will have to be on the look out for any further Death Eater activity. On a lighter note, Ron, Hermione, you two will be trained this summer in healing, dueling, stealth, and occlumency under the tutelage of Madam Pomfrey, Alastor Moody and I. Has anyone else something to report?" People began to look from one to another, no one offering anything. Seeing this as a negative response, Dumbledore continued. "Well then, I deem this meeting of the Order of the Phoenix over. Mrs. Weasley informs me that dinner will be out within the hour if you wish to stay." Snape immediately fled the room, well, as much as a dripping bat can flee. He was followed by a few others who were heading home.

'An hour...' thought Ron. "Hey, Hermione, I want you to show me a couple of things." He said. She began to protest, finding the discussion between Mr. Weasley and Dedilus Diggle about self clipping toenail clippers fascinating. But she couldn't seem to find a reason not to go with him once he held her hand and looked at her.

“Okay.” She said brightly, in a near un-Hermione like way, as she got up and followed Ron up to his room.

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While the Order had continued downstairs, Tonks had found Remus in his room. He looked feral, walking around, flexing his hands, with glowing yellow lupine eyes.

“Need to tell him... can’t, Dumbledore is keeping all his mail...I can try the mirror... No, I think someone mentioned he broke it. Have to get that fixed... I can go see him... No, don’t know who is on guard duty, might be Moody tonight...Might be nobody tonight...” Remus Lupin said, talking to himself, not hearing anyone walk into the room, looking completely sober now.

“Remus.” Tonks said.

“... I can ... No, that won't work either...”

“Remus.” Tonks tried again.

“I could talk to Tonks, she might help...No, and she would probably think I was using her. Merlin knows she’s had a hard enough time with guys taking advantage of her, if what Sirius told me is true...”

“Remus...?” Tonks asked quietly.

“Nice pants indeed! Can’t believe I said that... True nonetheless, I suppose... She does constantly flirt with me... but that’s just the way she is I guess... I’m getting off subject...”

“Remus?” Tonks tried, once more blushing slightly. ‘I can’t believe he said that, and he thinks I was just flirting with him? Sirius told me that he has issues accepting women who are interested because of being a werewolf, but I’ve been at it for almost a year now. Just how much more forward do I need to get? Oh, that would work quit nicely...’ she thought, with an impish grin.

"I can try to-" But he was unable to speak, as he lacked the oxygen he previously had when a pair of velvet lips covered his own. He was too shocked to fight the intruding tongue for a moment, but slowly opened his eyes to see Tonks' face. He quickly pushed her away, hearing a moan of protest from her.

"Tonks what are yo-" But he was once again cut off by a kiss. "But I'm a werew-" Kiss. "Your too y-" Kiss. "And I'm too ol-" Kiss.

"Shut up Remus. I don't care about any of that, and I'm lonely, I like you, have liked you for a long time. And I know you feel the same way. I need this, and so do you. So just shut up." She told him, pleading with her eyes. Eyes that suddenly glowed a molten silver color, before turning back to their usual soft pink.

"What happened Tonks?" Remus asked, wondering why her eyes had turned that color. The same color Sirius' eyes turned after the death of his brother, Regulus. Sirius had once told him that it alerted family members to a change with the family, to those who were concerned.

"What changed? Something with the Black family?" he asked, calming himself from the previous activities as he did so.

"Yeah, there is a new head of family. But I don't know why I would be notified. Mum was disowned years ago. Only the head can change that. But who would Sirius' heir be? If he didn't have a blood heir, then he would have dissolved the family, instead of having Bellatrix or Narcissa, or even her son, taking over. Obviously Harry would get whatever money the Blacks had, but only a blood heir can take over the Head of the Family and titles."

"I don't know. I think you, and most likely your mother also, has been recognized by the new head. I wonder... no ... he would have told me. I think he would have told me anyway. Unless he feared what Dumbledore would do... or his reaction... or both. I do remember James saying something about the attack during our 7th year..." Remus began pacing again, trying to figure out this latest mystery.

“Remus!” Tonks shouted, trying to get his attention. “What are you going on about?”

“I’m not sure yet, but if I’m right, we have to go see Harry, now. You still have guard duty tonight right?” he asked her, seeing her nod he carried on. “Alright, then lets go then.” Tonks nodded again, following him out of the room. They made it out of the door, avoiding the majority of the Order. Apparently the meeting had just ended.

As soon as they were outside of the wards of Grimmauld Place, they apparated to Privet Drive. As they passed the houses on their way to Number 4, they began to hear screaming. Running into the house, they were met by a scene they never expected to see.

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This chapter will tie into the next, which will hopefully be out soon. Next up, Knocturn Alley.

Alright, now that I have enough reviews (not that I am counting, just that I want to answer and or thank those who did when I did have a few to answer) Question. I have seen all the reviews posted (not answered) without spaces, just /. Does that make it only one word? I agree with those who start to read a story, only to find that all the words come from review answers. I’ll try to keep them short.

To all, thank you for your reviews, it makes me feel like this is productive and accomplishes something.

Attention Attention Attention Attention Attention

All Birdie names are game... (Well I thought it was funny anyway ...) Tell me names that you would like the Fried Fowls to be referred to as, I am running out of ideas. I’ll try to use them effectively. Thanks.

UldAses/Heather/AzureSky123/schmanski/feartheturtle35/mauripendragon/solar1/Maben00/AlphaPhi/Blue Werewolf Boy/jbfritz/Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ray and Matt are so all mine/HarrygoestoHollywood/Shadowed Rains/gaul1/Salena Snape/bandgsecurtiyaw/fanficfreak35/CirceVisigoth/Kaveman/gaul1/j

bfritz/shadowwalker2/superb/Matt101/ThrainTalonwater/hilarydillarydo  
c/AzureSky123/Voldemortsunderstudy/Zaxxon/alen/bandgsecurtiyaw/  
RexMeino/SalenaSnape/DarkWolfYingFa/Zevrillion/imgonnadie/snow  
fox2000/richard a lake/Kazua/firelordeg/OdinMage

Shadow Lighthawk: A couple of other people have asked why it was changed. I wanted the name to fit what I had in mind for the character. No longer 'Gryffindor', or 'Golden', but black and silver. A 'Seraph' is a celestial being, an angel of sorts, but also seen as a serpent. 'Seraph Orion Black', Black (or dark) angel of Orion, a dark angel, merciless to enemies, but still compassionate. That is what I wanted, anyway.

rlmess: I still have not fixed the grammar yet. Well, I am going to attempt to replace chapter 5 with this update to see what happens. It has been re-edited. It probably still has a few things wrong though. I will try to replace the others sometime soon. And thanks for the comments, they make me laugh. And what do you mean about the A/N's? Put them at the bottom?

Kin Pandun: Thanks. Thanks for the ideas. I may use them.

Fireflashphoenix: like your stories, especially Shades Of Black – A Black Dawn.

## Chapter 7: News

At around the same time that Nyphrodora Tonks was made aware of her status within the Black family, Andromeda Tonks, Narcissa Malfoy, Draco Malfoy, and Bellatrix Lestrange were made aware of theirs also.

“Teddy!” screamed Andromeda Tonks, having just been alerted to her new status.

“What is it Andy?” A concerned Ted Tonks asked.

“Th-the Black family... it has a new head.” She said, as if this explained everything. Seeing her husbands puzzled stare she continued.

“The Black family can only have a blood heir as the head. The only one that I know about would my sister’s,” she spat the word, “son. But it’s not him. Nymphie, and I, and you also by marriage, are now part of the Black family. I’m no longer disowned. I never knew that Sirius had a child. I wonder if he even did. I have a feeling that if I am acknowledged, then my loving sisters may have been disowned.”

“What does all this mean for us? Were our own family, why do we need the Black family? And why does it matter that your sisters are disowned?” Ted asked, not understanding .

“Ted, we are our own family. But now we are also part of the Black family. Okay, think of it like ‘The Godfather’, only you wont be called upon to do any favors. The Head of Family is responsible for the protection and well being of those within his family, i.e. you, Nymphie, and I. My cousin, Sirius who passed away recently, I think you met him once. Funny guy, anyway, he was the Head of the Family. My sisters, as well as their husbands are supporters of you-know-who. Sirius’s mother was the Head during the time that he was thrown into Azkaban without a trial. Mrs. Black died while Sirius was imprisoned, leaving him as the Head, but unable to do anything. Since neither Narcissa nor Bellatrix were heads, they could only take what Mrs. Black had stipend them per month, otherwise you-know-who would have all of the Black fortune by now. We will have to contact

Gringotts to find out what we are being stipened.” She said, looking sad at the memory of her younger cousin’s fate.

“Why, exactly, do we have to get a stipend? I work hard to provide for us, as do you. And with Nymphrodora out of the house now, it’s not as hard as it once was. I do not want charity Andy.” Ted told her.

“I understand, and I agree Ted. But it is not so much charity as it is, say, an allowance that the Head gives to family members to ensure that we are taken care of. We are not expected to live off this money, and to do so would be an insult to the Head. At the same time, to not take it would be also seen as a slight on him, or her, for that matter. We will have to meet with the Head at some point. Could you see if you can contact Nymphie? I believe that she would have been notified also, but probably not to the extent that I was.” Andromeda asked her husband, as she pulled out her wand and drew a complicated pattern in the air next to the wall. A drawer opened up to reveal an old photo album of the Black family, the only thing she took from the ‘The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black’. “I’m going to look through this. Maybe I can figure some things out.” She told her husband, flipping through the pages.

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“Mother.” Draco Malfoy whispered urgently. He had just been notified of his disownment from the Black family. While this in itself was not a huge problem for him, after all, he was a Malfoy heir, money was not a problem. It did mean a large amount of trouble for his mother, however.

“I know Draco, I know.” She told him.

“Why did this happen. I mean, I was supposed to inherit the Black fortune. What’s happening? Who’s the Head? No pureblood in their right mind would have disowned us!”

“I Know this Draco. I do not know who the new head is. About you getting the Black fortune, well that would only happen if we could contest it. My mutt of a cousin would have left it to Potter. The



headship, however, cannot be given to anyone not of Black blood. This means that Sirius would have had to have had an heir. And not being part of the family any longer, we have no right to find out who the new head is. The Goblins at Gringotts wouldn't tell you if you if their lives depended on it, let alone being bribed with any money that I no longer have. At the Ancestral Black House there is... funny, I can't seem to recall where that is exactly... at any rate there is a Family Tapestry, which could have told us, but Sirius was blown off of it when he ran away. It wouldn't show any children of his unless the Head had a house elf restore it. And you are right Draco, there are not many pureblood families that would disown us, besides Weasley, or the Bones'. Your Aunt, Bellatrix, has also been disowned as well, and there are many who fear her wrath as much as the Dark Lord's."

"Mother, without that money, you no longer have any purpose for father." Draco told her, trying to hide his concern, which he would have succeeded with any one but his mother.

"Do not worry Draco. I know this. I do not know what I will tell your father, but I should have some time before I will have to present the money to him, to give to the Dark Lord." But she did not sound at all certain. "Nevertheless, understand that your father is a fool. Believe what you wish, but do not follow the Dark Lord. 'Nemo ut succedo', your father told me, when I married him. He said that I was now part of a House that would 'Bow to no one'. Yet he grovels to that...thing, every time he calls him. Like a pathetic dog who still comes back to his master even after being beaten. Hope that you never have to be in his presence, Draco, his power is intoxicating, and his words compel you. But his promises are empty and to fail, to fail means pain and eventual death."

Narcissa knew that she did not have the money to present to her husband, and the fact that she would never again have access to said money, would prompt her husband to kill her. He did not love her, nor had he ever. She never wanted to marry him anyway. Like most of the marriages between purebloods, it was an arranged marriage, for business and purity, not love. Besides, he had had many mistresses, and it was no secret, outside the Death Eaters and her, anyway, that Lucius sometimes partook in Crabbe and Goyle's hosted orgies. How those two apes ever managed to procreate, she

would never know. However, death would be a gift that she was not going to be given. Lucius imitated the Dark Lord's methods of punishment when extremely displeased, Cruciatus, systematic cutting, needle torture, and a curse that would remove your skin in layers, causing death through blood loss and complications from exposure was one that Lucius was particularly fond of. Yes, she was dead. These words would be the last she would probably speak to her son for a long time, if ever again, no matter what she had told him. She never showed much emotion, but she did care for her son. She was the only one who did.

"Go on to bed now, Draco. I will figure this out. Say nothing to your father." She commanded him, softly.

"Yes, mother." Draco answered, knowing that he would not see her in the morning. 'I will kill him if he does anything to her...' were his thoughts as he made his way to bed.

After Draco had left, she put the firewhiskey that she had been nursing since earlier that evening down on the table and headed for her bedroom. 'I must leave.' She thought to herself, as her self-preservation instincts kicked in. She was not a Slytherin for nothing, despite what her husband might say about her. She had made a few contacts in the area of Knocturn and a couple outside of the country. If she wanted to get lost, she could do so easily. 'There is the sub-alley deviation. Not many know about that. And I have not seen the 'Luna Argentum' since before I graduated. If Vesta is as hospitable as she ever was, then I can hide out there until better accommodations can be made.' Making a decision, she grabbed her best multi-compartment trunk and began throwing as much of her jewelry, clothes, and other items as she could into the first few compartments.

"Why not?" she said to herself as she grabbed another trunk, after shrinking the first one, and summoned all of the rare and powerful books in the Malfoy library. 'He's already going to be livid. Oh the tantrum he will throw! I will have to keep in contact with Draco somehow. But perhaps it is better that he does not know where I am. Plausible deniability and all.' Finishing in the library, she shrunk her second trunk and made her way to the apparition point. Thinking 'I hope Mystique's is open.' As she apparated to a deserted London

alley a few blocks from the Leaky Cauldron. Stepping out to the street, she was met with the glow of a sign reading “Mystique Apparel”.

Ooo  
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Bellatrix Lestrange sat in her tub within the Dark Lord's stronghold. She did not know where it was located, nor did she care. She was trying to evaluate her life. She had just been disowned, meaning she could no longer give her master the money he required to run his operations. This was, in a word, bad. Of course that was an understatement, but Trixie liked words that did not adequately clarify their extent.

“This is baaadd.....” Trixie told herself.

“Yeah, no shit.” Bellatrix replied.

“He’s gonna get us goooood...”

“Shut up.” Bellatrix told herself sadly. She wasn’t sad. Not really. But she was hurt that she had failed her master again, and that she was almost expendable. She had seen it in his eyes, at the Ministry. Those cold, calculating scarlet orbs. Deciding whether or not to take her or leave her to her imprisonment. Like her husband. Or late husband. Trixie laughed.

“Gave him a nice kiss, they did! Uh-huh!” Trixie said in a baby like voice.

To prevent his escape, the Minister had had her husband given the Dementor's Kiss. All the others who did not manage to make it out of custody were sent to deepest depths of Azkaban. Those, like precious Lucius were able to slip out, via the Minister's pocket and were now fugitives.

“He’s not going to let this go unpunished. Not like he does anything else.”

“Nope, he’ll torture us till even I have another personality in my head, then pass us around to be raped, you know, make an example to any other female Death Eaters, o’ course, by then we wont have any mind left, so it wont matter. Probably hang us by our toes after we finally die. Honestly, the man has no imagination. Just Crucio this or Avada that”

“Maybe, but he will be especially pissed with this, after our latest failure at the Ministry.” Bellatrix replied.

“Your as good as dead, babe.”

“Yep.”

“Never to torture again.”

“I know.”

“Or kill”

“Sad.”

“Or squash Wormtail under high-healed boots”

“And I so wanted to do that...”

“Or play with the fluffy kittens...”

“What?”

“Nothing...I don’t know about you, but I would rather go out on my own terms.”

“I quit agree.”

“I mean, death is a gift to us. One that we won’t get if Master has his way.”

“Uh-huh.”

“Are we going to do this then?”

“Yes.”

Right, well you know what they say...”

“ Down the road...”

“And across the street...”

And with that Bellatrix conjured a straight razor that she had seen Dolohov use once during one of the many interrogations of prisoners. She dipped it into her now cold water almost reverently, and then produced her left wrist. She carefully brought it up, and made a slight incision, just enough to make a cut. She continued, this time deeper, relishing in the sting that began to flame to the middle of her forearm. She looked at the cut in fascination, the blood slowly seeping out, then faster, till it was a steady flow. She did it again in the center of her arm, this time up to her elbow.

It was really beginning to hurt now. Nowhere near the Cruciatus curse, but it still hurt. She loved it. Another cut, the same length as the first, next to the center one. She did three quick slices across the heavily flowing wounds, creating a disturbing chess board, or intersections, as she saw them. She no longer felt the pain. Just cold from shock, and cloudy from blood loss. Trixie took over around then, and seeing the streets, decided to make little stores. She drew little boxes inside the squares until her arm ceased to function, and she fell back into the scarlet water, more dead than alive, lungs filling with water. This was how she was found by house elves when she failed to show up at a Death Eater meeting some days later.

OOoooOO

So what do you think? I know that it is short, and for me, that is pretty bad. Like I said, next will be longer and Knocturn. What did you think of Trixie and Bellatrix?

## Chapter 8: Knocturn and a Black Smith

Seraph and Cheleb made their way toward Knocturn Alley. He saw a few interesting stores on his way in, including 'Occhio's eye-care'. With all of his changes his eyesight had improved, but he still needed his glasses if he wanted to read something. He figured they would have some sort of potion, or perhaps advice to improve his eyesight, legal or not. But first, he needed clothes. In this place, everything one did, from speech, to walk, to clothes said something about you. Whether you were an easy mark, how much money you had, how powerful you were, your affiliations, etc. Right now he looked like a street urchin, and would be treated as such. In this place, fear meant respect, and respect meant power. And power, power was how you survived. Most of the people inside of the Alley stayed away from people like Malfoy because of his reputation and ties to the Dark Lord, but they would not have any qualms about ripping into Seraph for all he was worth. The Head of the Black Family, even if the miscreants eyeing him did not know it, would not be taken lightly, even if he was an unknown. A couple of stores past 'Borgin and Burkes' he found 'Clotho's Fine Wizard Apparel est. 589 b.c.' in strangely timeless paint above the door.

Entering the store, you could immediately see the difference from the dingy alley to this impressive, well, warehouse was the closest word Seraph could think. The store was expanded to outrageous proportions, seemingly going on forever. The lights were bright enough to allow you to see the clothes well, but not annoyingly bright like the department stores Aunt Petunia loved so much. The clothes were divided in two, separated by a large isle, Men's and boy's one side, Women's and girl's the other. The sides were then divided further by size, color, material, stitch, style, type, and occasion. How that worked, Seraph did not know, but it was clearly labeled on the floating signs that would critique your decisions every so often, not unlike bathroom mirrors. Oddly enough, especially for a store that catered to 'Purebloods', there was an entire section of muggle clothing, though it was towards the back and slightly obscured by an odd glowing haze.

"I am Mistress Clotho, how may I help you, young sir?" asked a mysterious old woman with a curious expression, carrying a pair of

archaic scissors in a black sash and a glowing golden thread wrapped around her wrist. The thread seemed to move of its own accord, but stayed put on her wrist for the most part. Seraph then noticed her aura. While she did not appear to be any older than say, Professor McGonagall, her aura said otherwise, just by the feeling it gave off. The golden thread matched perfectly to her shiny goldish aura, with warm brown strands, not unlike the melted chocolate color that matched her eyes.

“Yes,” Seraph began, mentally shaking himself from his musings, “I’m in need of a full wardrobe, best of the best. I want them tailored to my measurements. I am curious though, as to why you have a muggle clothing section in the store?” Seraph asked.

“You see that, do you? That is very interesting. Much like the entrance to the ‘Leaky Cauldron’ that has muggle repelling wards, that end of the store has a sort of ‘wizard’ repelling ward on it. There is an entrance at the other end to the muggle world, where this store is known as ‘Mystique Apparel’, where you can find high end clothing for good prices. And, for some of my best costumers, I allow them to use it as an entrance to this part of the store, or to go directly into Knocturn. I realized after some years that muggles were an untapped source of profit in my type of business, and once I knew how to incorporate muggle clothing into my store, I doubled my revenue and have never regretted it. You, sir, are either very talented, or my wards are weakening.” She said, her aura outline changing to a yellowy color that felt like caution. She continued, however.

“You do not ask with contempt, like many who come to this store would. This leads me to believe that you do not hold disdain for them, or you also see the benefit from their interaction. Anyway, if you would like any of the muggle clothing, they come in all the same material that the robes do, plus a few others like denim and corduroy. The same charms can be applied that are standard on the robes, such as stain repellent, odor reducer, anti-wrinkle charms and the like, but they will cost extra, as well as the special charms I can place on any other product I make. The other materials are cotton, velvet, corduroy, Asian silkworm silk, flubberworm silk (they are more durable, and of better quality than the regular silk), fur, jute, organza (a muggle material I use for dress robes, mind), canvas, and

Acromantula silk. If you are interested, and I have a feeling you will be, my husband runs a dragon hide shop a few doors down. If you want, I can give him your measurements and have some samples ready for you. The canvas is used for work-robos and industrial potion robes, as they are cheap, durable, and highly resistant to potion stains and effects. However, the Acromantula silk is by far the best of all the materials. Light as the wind and as soft as a lover's caress, they are durable, and have a natural resistance to some lower level hexes, jinxes, and curses, not unlike the great spiders themselves. They come in mostly darker colors, the less tampering with color, the better quality it is. It is also the most expensive material I use. So what exactly do you want?" She asked, after listing what the robes and clothes were made of.

"Like I said before, a full wardrobe. Acromantula silk for everything applicable, and the best material that can be used for everything else." He told her. The lady looked at him for a moment, taking in his appearance. He would have looked at home in one of the many muggle slums or allies that littered the city. Two things, however made her reevaluate this man before her. One, the silver rim around his intense, emerald green eyes, eyes that would resemble the Avada Kedavra curse when angered, she imagined, and the second was the ring he wore. Rings like those were only given to the head of some old families, meaning that if he wasn't a Weasley, and he did not look like one, he had money. Though she could not see the crest to discern what house he headed. Making her decision, she walked to the front door and locked it.

If you have the gold for a new wardrobe, then I do believe that you have officially become my number one customer." She told him happily as she walked back from the doors. "We need no interruptions now, do we? Now, I have some questions. There is a special technique that I know that will allow one to lace certain materials into clothing. One of my best examples is that I can lace demiguise hair into the material. The demiguise hair will not make you, nor the material invisible, there is not enough laced through to do that, but it will allow you to better blend into the shadows, if you wish. They also lend a slight spectral illusion to the one who wears it. This is for an extra fee, of course, if you are interested. I also must



ask if you are interested in any dragon hide? I believe that I mentioned my husband runs a shop.”

“Yes, I am definitely going to want dragon hide, and. What does your husband create out of the hide?” Seraph asked.

“I’m not entirely sure any more. You would have to ask him. But I do know that he makes dragon hide cloaks, vests, and some new pant he keeps going on about. I also know he was experimenting with manticores hide, but it was terribly hard to come by. But if you think that I’ll be expensive, you try to buy a dragon hide wardrobe from him. Huh! That would clean out any family’s coffers. Not even the Ministry will buy too much from him; Aurors are not worth that much apparently. Though he did mention a few Unspeakables came to see him for something or other though, can’t quite remember when though. He is the best however, after all these years he had better be...” She chuckled to herself, as if laughing at a private joke. “Once you’re measured, I’ll send him your dimensions. On second thought, I’ll have him come and speak with you. But first, the measurements!” She said, her speech shifting from somber and professional to high pitched and energetic, it was slightly unnerving.

“Measure!” she command her wrist. The golden thread slowly unwound itself and actually stood at attention, Seraph thought that it would have saluted her if it had the appendages to do so, before becoming a weird sort of whirlwind, wrapping itself around his head, length of his legs, inseam, throat (which, had he seen any ill intentions in the women’s aura, pulled out his dagger and killed the demented string), hair, and finally attempted to insert itself into his head via his ears before the Mistress told it to stop. All in all, he would take Ollivander’s measuring tape over that damn frenzied twine any day.

“Well now, I’ll call my husband, Vulcan, and you can look through the styles.” She told him, before going to a back room. Now alone, Seraph looked around. ‘Styles indeed’ he thought to himself, ‘Only Malfoy would go for some of this.’ As he picked up a Flubberworm silk Dress Robe with actual Topaz stone studs threaded through the material and large gaudy pieces of white gold hanging off of silver ropes from the deep purple Robe. Continuing to look, he saw the

outline of Cheleb sniffing at the door that Mistress Clotho had gone into, before disappearing completely and coming into view just to the side of Seraph. A moment later, a large man came out carrying a few pieces of leather of various colors and a hammer on his belt. He was a gruff looking man, apparently made of muscle. This image was ruined by the fact that he looked to be older than even Dumbledore, except he had an oddly chalky black goatee that extended down to his waist, instead of the full beard. Seraph was just about to say something when he noticed this mans aura. It was a royal purple with intermingling shades of light grey, and brilliant red strands capped in black. If the man looked old, then it was nothing compared to how his aura felt. It was even more ancient then his wife's.

"My, my. Never again did I think that I would see another Black heir." He began in a raspy baritone, like hearing a wheeze in a deep cave. "Not after the death of the last Black, Sirius I believe. I was not aware, however, that he had produced an heir. How interesting. I have not been in the presence of a true Grim since young Phineas, he never felt that it was time for the old Guild to return, and I suppose he was right. But now, and I think you would agree, it is a time for change, or will be soon. And change is what we do best." The old man said, as if remembering old times.

"What do you know of the Blacks?" Seraph asked icily, wand immediately in hand, his other resting on his blade, eyes narrowed and pulsing slowly. Cheleb became visible instantly and began growling menacingly at the man in a position not unlike a cat getting ready to pounce, the fur on his neck spiking slightly.

"I, young master Black, am Smith Vulcan, or Smithy, or to perhaps to better explain the significance of my name to you, Black's Smith, more commonly referred to at this time as a Black Smith. My father and his father before him have always served the Grims Guild. The first Black, after having served him for many years, granted me a gift for my loyalty and service. He performed a ritual that he had created on my wife and I that increased our life force, allowing us much longer lives then even some of the most powerful of wizards or witches, though we are probably less powerful then some, and can die just as easily as any other, that event will most likely not be by natural causes. It was, and remains, my duty to provide my services

to the Black's, and most recently, those that can pay! Beyond making dragon hide, weapons, and other items of interest, I can point you into the right direction for what you might need; after all living this long helps in making connections." The man said, stepping into the light further. Seraph saw then his shining bald head and darkened features of a man who has worked too close to fire for too long a time, and that his goatee was not actually all black, but a dark grey that looked black from ash. His eyes held the wisdom of his years and his trade inside daunting black and scarlet eyes that literally looked as if they were on fire, which were gazing fixedly on Seraph.

"Sorry to have taken so long, another customer just came in through the back..." Mistress Clotho trailed off, sensing the tense atmosphere. She looked from Seraph, to her husband, and back again. She saw the young man's hand resting on the handle of a blade and was able to see the crest. A grim. Confusion could be seen in her eyes, before understanding the curiosity, fear flashed across her face for a moment. Then she noticed Cheleb, and her eyes took on a Dumbledoreish twinkle.

"Ohhhh..." The old woman cooed, in a decidedly childish and undignified way, as she plopped down on to her knees. "Such a cute puppy! Come here puppy, puppy, puppy!" She said, in that manner in which women use on babies and small animals alike. Cheleb hesitated only a second before bolting for the woman. "Yes, such a good baby..." She continued, as she began scratching behind Cheleb's ears.

Seraph stood there, slightly amused, and slightly annoyed that the dog had left his side so easily. Vulcan, however, was trying to wipe his face off with his unhindered hand. "Why me?" he mumbled. "Maybe we should have had kids... damn woman could never make up her mind... I'll have to buy her a damn dog now too." Vulcan pulled his hand away from his face. "Come on, we will go to my shop and you can get outfitted for hide there. Just tell her what you want. She'll here ya'." He told Seraph, as he began walking to the backdoor he came out of.

Heading the old man's advice, he began listing what he wanted. "Mistress, I will need 8 pairs of pants, all black, stitched with silver

thread, double Acramantula silk grade. Assorted boxers, socks, undershirts, in cotton and flubberworm silk. 14 Button up Acromantula silk shirts, 4 silver, 2 emerald green, 2 blue, 2 deep blood red, 4 black. 12 open daily wear robes, Silver, blue, green, red, and black. I want all of those to be made to be worn open. I want a few muggle suit jackets and vests, all black with ties in the same colors of the shirts. All of those are to be in laced with demiguise hair. I want 4 winter cloaks, and 2 hooded cloaks, all black, lined in Acromantula silk inside and laced with as much demiguise hair as you can on the outside. I want the usual charms, plus distortion charms on the hooded cloaks. I will pay extra for everything to be charmed to accommodate sudden growth or body change.” Seraph added, thinking of his newfound skill. “I will also need 8 pairs of school robes. I want a pair of pants, shirt and cloak ready for me by the time I return from your husband’s shop.” He finished, not believing that she had heard him, let alone that she would remember what he said. She nodded absently, now rubbing the dog’s stomach.

“Traitor.” Seraph growled in an undertone. Cheleb just gave him that Black grin. Seraph walked through the door in the back to be met with a huge fire place made of some sort of stone.

“Well, come on young Black. Address is ‘Vulcan’s Armory, Knocturn Alley’. Got it? Good. Follow along in a moment” Vulcan told him as he went through the grayish pink stone hearth.

“Alright,” Seraph said to himself a couple of minutes later. “Vulcan’s Armory, Knocturn Alley” he commanded the fire, as he threw down the emerald powder and walked through.

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“There you are, come in, come in.” The elder man told him, as he walked out of the fire place, amazingly on two feet and into a show room seemingly made of leather or metal. Yellowish-green torches lent to the medieval atmosphere. A dragon’s head, a Swedish Short-Snout, if Seraph was correct, was attached to the back wall, teeth and all. Piles of dragon hide were stacked on large, sturdy tables spread throughout the store. The granite stone floor reflected the

torch light onto the weapons held inside large cases attached to the walls. Glass windows on the cases allowed you to see inside.

“Welcome to my humble shop. As you can see, I work mostly with weapons and dragon hide. A few hundred years back, I had a lot of call for charmed mail, as many wizards needed protection from muggle arrows and such. I still have some, but, with dragon hide, you get protection and comfort for a quarter of the weight and much more durable, and...” he paused for effect, it seemed. “stylish.” He deadpanned, and then grinned. Seraph thought that it was a bit anti climatic, but did not comment as he looked at a mannequin that Vulcan was looking at proudly.

“Now, having worked with dragon hide, and armor in general for as long as I have, you learn the ways that it can be manipulated, and ways it can’t, and improve on what is out there and hopefully come up with something revolutionary. Take this dummy here. Well, not so much the dummy, but what it’s wearing’. Dragon hide cloak, Horntail and Ironbelly mix to be precise, a particularly strong mix that I have discovered, hood has some special features too. But more about that later. Two arm holsters, for wand or dagger, better then even Auror grade. I had some Unspeakables come through a while back and contracted me to supply them with holsters with specific functions; they were the best I had ever made at the time. They have been improved upon since, and I added some extras of course. Personal security blood measures, plus anti theft, summoning, and removal charms, a little redundant, I know, but you can’t be too careful. Once they have bonded, you can make them invisible, so as not to draw attention. They are summoned into your hand through a wrist movement by default, but they can also be made to release into your hands with a chosen movement, ranging from a twirl of your finger to the flex of a muscle if you’re skilled enough for it or even thoughts. That will cost you extra though, mighty piece of rune work, that. I am working on a permeability enchantment so that they cannot be seen or felt when used with the invisibility function. I’m not making much progress though.

Moving on, we have the under vest and over vest. The under vest, as the name implies, is worn close to the skin, under a shirt to provide protection that is not readily seen and is usually made of a thin piece

of hide. After being worn for a few hours, it will resize itself to your body and can withstand sudden body changes to a point. The over vest is worn over a shirt or the under vest and resembles the short mail shirts of old.

Many hide armorers believe that close skin contact is the best way for protection, hence the under vest. While this is one of the best ways for protection, it is not the only way. Layering is also good way, which is why I make over vests as well. There is another way though, that combines the protection of layering with much more comfort. This brings me to the pants. Instead of being the usual tight pants that are made, if they are made at all, I have devised a way to turn the dragon hide into a type of mesh like material that still holds the same protection, while being far more comfortable and less impeding in movement. This also allows me to mix together hides much easier, which is how the cloak is made of Horntail and Ironbelly. Being of this mesh, the pants and cloak will resist cutting curses much better and will resist most, if not all spells created to impede movement. A bludgeoning or bone shattering curse may get through partially, leaving bruises, but that is a hell of a lot better then crushed bones. And as for the unforgivables, well, just don't get hit.

Finally, we have the dragon hide boots. They are made of Hebredean Black, and self-sizing enchantments come standard. They can be charmed to be silent and not leave foot-prints. These are charms, however, and may need to be recast at some point, years from now, mind, but remember that. What you see before you is the best of the best. No one else can make gear like this; they haven't the skill, or the knowledge for that matter." Vulcan finished, pride evident in his voice.

Seraph could only gaze at the set in awe, amazed by the creation of Vulcan's. The cloak was a deep black that did not seem to reflect any local light, but did turn slightly grey or silver if you looked at it at an angle. The pants and boots looked the same, like they were made for shadows. The under vest was much lighter in color, and allowed you to see the individual scales of the hide. The pants were slightly baggy and had pockets of various sizes running along the sides.

“So, ah... what do ya’ think?” Vulcan asked a quietly, sounding almost if he was wondering if the work was worth praise, which brought Seraph out of his stupor.

“They are amazing. I’ve never seen anything like this, except in a business suit once, or twice technically, I suppose, but they were nothing like this. Your wife said that you were the best, and I truly believe that you are.” Seraph told him.

“Good, good.” Vulcan said softly, mostly to himself. “Always appreciate praise from a Black. I am glad you like this set though, as I was making it for the next Black who came along. Been in the works for a few years now, I was hoping to meet young Sirius one day, but as it is, it’s yours now.”

“Really, how much? Your wife said, as I mentioned before, that you were the best, and charged accordingly.”

“Nothing, as I believe I said it was ‘yours now’.” Seraph could see that the man would not take anything from him, so instead, acquiesced.

“All right, I’ll take it. I will however give you funding for the permeability enchantment. I believe that it has great potential. I would also like you to be ready to make more suits like these, or at least the cloaks, boots, and holsters, sometime in the next year.” Seraph told him.

“I believe that I can agree to that, young master Black. Some advice though. While dragon hide cloaks are relatively common, and not necessarily purchased for combat, people will see the over vest and think that you are going to start something or expect battle at all times. I would suggest not wearing the over vest unless you do expect battle, otherwise, the rest is more than adequate and more subtle. Now, as your were prepared to draw on me earlier, I noticed those fine blades that you carry. Your numerous times great grandfather used those himself, quite effective they were. If you can find his portrait, which I think would be somewhere in your vault, he could teach you a great many things. Now, I told you that I could point you in the right direction for what you want to find, so tell me, what exactly is it that you wish to obtain?” The old man asked him.

“Well, I am going to need some up to date books on a few subjects, and also see about having my eyes fixed. I’ve gotten, or in the process of getting clothing. I will most definitely need a new wand. I will also need a place to live through the summer and appliances for said place. And power. I need to become more powerful. I know that my ancestors created some enhancement rituals, and I will need the required elements for them.” Seraph listed off, remembering the mental list he had made.

“Books are easy. Borgin and Burkes will have your basic borderline legal books out front, and while Borgin may have some Dark Arts items, he doesn’t deal too much in serious Dark books, but rather books that teach you what the ministry does not want you to know, or was too hard for them to do, so they banned it. Things like near silent Apparition, a teaching nearly lost by now, Portkey creation, Obliviation, and a few other fun things. There is a place, down the alley, called Ledger’s Tomes, you can find just about any book there, on all the subjects, and they are kept up to date. Tell Borgin that the ‘Man is keeping me down’ after buying something. He’ll take you to a back room and tell him that I sent you. Ben Ledger leaves everything out in the open. They are all charmed to look like something else, and if you can’t see what they really are, then you probably shouldn’t be buying it.

Occhio’s is the best place around here for eye enhancements, though you’ll have to tell her that you ‘Want to see the world in new perspectives’. She’ll help you out. This won’t affect your scanning ability, but may help in other areas, depending on what she does. For ritual items, go to Flytr Apothecary. It sells all the ingredients you would want up front, and if you twist the broken bezaor to the right, and pull, the wall will open and just about any ingredient you would need for a ritual can be found there, down to heart wax and blood daggers. I would advise you to be careful with those rituals though. One mistake and you end up dead. For you wand, Dexter’s is the only place to go. He would beat Ollivander’s out of the market, except for the thing about his wands not being exactly legal; you’ll get the best results you have ever gotten with a wand. Appliances would best be found in Diagon Alley, at Spinner’s Ice box. The old man looked around, for a second, as if trying to see intruders in his obviously



empty store. And you say you need somewhere to live?" Vulcan asked. Seeing Seraph's nod, he continued. "Well, keep this in mind 'Black alley can be found at the end of Knocturn Corner'." Vulcan said, with a conspiratory wink.

(0)

I hate the fact that every time I put in a page break, FF takes it out. Oh well hopefully (0) will work for the few that I use.

That wraps up this chapter, or at least part one, of this chapter. I said that it would be the longest yet, and it is not. I decided to break it into two and the second should be out sometime soon, barring re-writes like this one went through. Tell me about any mistakes so that I can correct them. Grammatical that is, unless I did something ridiculously off canon and did not explain why. O 'Course, this is all AU, such is the nature of fanfiction, so I suppose it doesn't matter.

So, what do you think? Hope you enjoyed it, review as always, your comments help with the story.

To the reviewers:

UldAses/ Heather/ AzureSky123/ schmanski/feartheturtle35 /mauripendragon/ solar1/Maben00/ AlphaPhi/ Blue Werewolf Boy/ jbfritz/Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ray and Matt are so all mine/ HarrygoestoHollywood/ Shadowed Rains/ gaul1/ Salena Snape/bandgsecurtiyaw/fanficfreak35/CirceVisigoth/Kaveman/gaul1/j bfritz/shadowwalker2/superb/Matt101/ThrainTalonwater/hilarydilarydo c/AzureSky123/Voldemortsunderstudy/Zaxxon/alen/bandgsecurtiyaw/ RexMeino/SalenaSnape/DarkWolfYingFa/Zevrillion/imgonnadie/snow fox2000/richard a lake/Kazua/firelordeg/OdinMage ApocSM Phntm-Phnx yuiop jabarber69 Kyrissean Angelis Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ra... Lady FoxFire prutser bandgsecurtiyaw darkgryffin MatTer79 dumblefck76 Never Odd Or even highbrass Heart Mind Soul Digi Bonds imgonnadie Zevrillion Silat'r fallenAngel2389 Mcshnee the Triscuit Oxygen Kiss Schwinpt rlmess souls Shyposter Just Me Prime Xyverz Fear-of-Real-Life slashslut zafaran Queen of the Storms Helltanz98 Caddy94 WashedOut slayerstoryguy Maxennce

icedragon925 MysterioX Ravenfur TheWiseSirlvanTheShadowLord  
Eowyn23 ApocSM Barby-Black Anime-Ronin satyr-oh Killer916 Ugly  
Duckling the dark icon writers Neurotic Cat Goddess  
bandgsecurtiyaw jbfritz CastusAlbusCor xyvortex Zevrillion gaul1  
FairyQilan Maxennce Sky 05 coldfiredragon Shadowed Rains  
shadow of the black abyss japanesegirl102 PsychoSpiff Marikili68  
TenshiZujin Just Me Prime Tree Flower Akira Stridder DragonFoxy  
Dirbatua Theboss996 wavefunction Shadow King77 Zero Legacy  
ariachan85 v v Queen Victoria Rkhiara IrishLass6 Syfes Queen of the  
Storms Alexandria Lily Potter sirius009 WebGuy Caliko zafaran  
Jensindenial3516

jabarber69: I have an idea for that. Thanks for the review

Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ra...: Not sure yet. Still in the works. He  
will be a force to be reckoned with, but not without work or sacrifice.

MatTer79: I might have to use that. I love the idea. Not sure where it  
fits though...

MaireadInish: Thanks

GoddessofDestiny419: Which means that I am more original then I  
thought, or you have not read many of the circulating stories around  
here. Thanks for the review.

xyvortex: possibly

Maxennce: Glad you liked it. Kinda forgot about Neville... he'll get  
over it, I guess...

Kalze: Sirius was never properly disowned, only blasted off of the  
portrait.

Lady FoxFire: Yes, I was waiting for you to review, my lady... thanks  
for the review

## Chapter 9: Knocturn and a Wand Maker

“What?” Seraph asked, more by reflex than not understanding.

“I said ‘Black alley-’ but he was cut off by Seraph.

“Yes, I got that, but I have an entire alley here under Fidelius? Just how old are the places around here?”

“Yes, you have an entire alley here; it used to be very popular, back in the day, to have your entire family live in a private alley. They are actually quite spacious; you could fit several small manors in one alley. But I don’t know if any one else had one under the Fidelius Charm, o’course, you wouldn’t know, would you, unless you were told by the secret keeper, me, or the owner of said property, in this case you. You had to be told of the property before you can pass on the location, it is a security feature so that not all of the Blacks knew about it... but back to the other question. Have you looked at the signs, Mr. Black? Most will tell you how long they have been in business. The alleys themselves are more recent than the shops, but that is only by a few hundred years, they were actually built around the shops. That is one of the reasons why there are most of the twists and turns around here, creating those convenient hidden corners, especially utilized here in Knocturn.” Vulcan explained, as he began pulling the dragon hide off of the dummy.

“Here, you can put these on now, over in that fitting room there.” Vulcan pointed over his shoulder. “The Cloak, pants and boots will resize to fit you, and the under vest will size within a couple of hours. Till then, it may be slightly uncomfortable, maybe a little tight, but you will get used to it and it will fit like a glove afterwards. Like I said, you don’t need to wear the over vest now, but take it any way, put it with the clothes my wife will have done, since it would be better for you to wear these instead of regular clothes around here, but I would suggest wearing a shirt. Now get goin’.” The old man said as he dumped the bundle of leather he was carrying into Seraph’s arms and practically pushed him into the odd shaped cubicle like thing deemed a ‘fitting room’.

Seraph undressed and grabbed the pants, noticing that they were not nearly as thick, or as heavy as he would have imagined. Putting them on, they stretched to length and shrunk just a bit. They were loose and comfortable, and did not hinder any movements. Grabbing the boots, he put them on as well, and was amazed at the fit and comfort. He had never had a pair of shoes, let alone boots, that were his exact size, or close for that matter, another one of the simple pleasures denied to him by the lovely Dursleys. The boots were light and did not seem to make a sound as he walked around the cube-ish thing. Next was the under vest. The first challenge was getting his head in, but once that was accomplished, the vest seemed to try and accommodate him somewhat, though it was still difficult. A minute later he had it on and was trying to breath. Resting against the wall, he managed to get his lungs to work under the pressure and picked the cloak up, and put it on. On the dummy, it had looked like a work of art, something menacing and beautiful at the same time. On Seraph though, it just looked, well, right. It was like it was made specifically for him, and no one else. The cloak did not even have to resize. The sleeves were loose and slightly flared at the wrists, for the holsters, Seraph assumed, as he spotted them lying on the floor. The cloak touched to just above the boots ankle and were thicker then the pants, with an extra lining on the inside for comfort. He finally looked into the mirror that was hanging next to him, and nearly did a double take. He looked both intimidating and sophisticated, somehow, in what was really battle gear. Everything about that image just felt, and looked right. Seraph grinned at himself, put the wrist holsters on, which wrapped themselves onto his arms automatically. Seraph felt a light bite, as the holsters drew blood and glowed slightly, completing the bond. He then grabbed his wand and blades, and threw all of Dudley's cast offs into a pile and set them ablaze with a magnificent 'Incendio', which turned them promptly to ash before stepping out of the fitting room.

"Excellent ... excellent!" Exclaimed Vulcan, as he took in Seraph's appearance. "Exactly as I hoped it would look, even better, actually. Well, tell me. How does it feel? How does it move?" The old man asked excitedly. He really liked his work, apparently.

"It feels great. This has to be the best cloak I have ever had on, actually."

“That is good. I believe that with this type of cloak it would be best to keep your sword sheathed on you back. There is a hole there, to fit just such a blade through, so as to keep the sheath protected inside the cloak. There are many pockets on the inside of the cloak, the space inside has been expanded to hold a little bit more than it should, and one should be perfect for your smaller blade.” Vulcan informed Seraph. Seraph put the sheath on his back inside of the cloak and it strapped itself in and readily took the Katana through the hole in the top of the cloak, where the handle shimmered for a moment before becoming invisible. Looking to the insides, he found several hidden pockets, and picked one for his Tanto that left just the grip poking out.

“And you said that this will lessen the effects of some spells, and stop others?” Seraph asked.

“Yes, yes. It was created with offensive magic protection in mind, so it will lessen the effects of some curses, like bone shattering, bludgeoning, cutting, those types of spells, while nullifying almost all types of movement spells and low to medium-low powered magics. Physical blows will be slightly negated too. However, this is an aid in battle, it will not protect you from everything, and not all it protects against will be stopped completely, especially if it is a powerful caster. Do not rely on it too heavily.” He told him sagely, but then smiled.

“Now, here is the pamphlet on the holsters, they are already enchanted with the special summoning function, but it is set on the default of a wrist flick. The hood has some light obscuring charms, basic shadow haze, light notice me not, it all mixes together and is quite effective. You must put the hood on and activate it by saying ‘conceal’. The greatest thing about this hood however is the Mask feature. It is made out of a thinner dragon hide mesh and protects the face. The mask covers the face completely, but you will be able to see through it. The mask is the same color as the cloak, so with the hood being round and the mask black, you would not be mistaken as a Death Eater with their pointed hoods and half-skull masks( ; ). Activation word is ‘skirmish’. Remember those, but they are also in the pamphlet if you forget.”

Seraph nodded and tried the features out. First he tried the holsters with his wand, which he completely missed the first couple of times, but got it right afterwards and did not miss again. Then he tried the concealing feature and the mask, both of which worked how they should. Vulcan informed him that the mask made him look like some sort of wraith-ish thing, not quite Dementor, but intimidating with only his eyes being slightly seen through the mesh.

"I think you should pick up a shirt at least from my wife. If your order was very large, you will probably have to pick the rest up within the next couple of days."

"Alright, thank you Vulcan. You have been a great help to me today, and I think you will be again in the future." Seraph said.

"Oh, it was no trouble at all young master, no trouble at all. Come back anytime that you need anything else or something repaired, or even just to talk. An old man likes company now and again, and I think you may benefit from it as well. The floo address to my wife's shop is 'Clotho's Apparel, Knocturn Alley'" Vulcan said.

Seraph thanked Vulcan again and used his fireplace to floo to "Clotho's Apparel, Knocturn Alley"

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ooO

"Can I help you..., oh hello again young sir. I have the things you asked for completed, though the rest will take another couple of days." The Mistress informed him upon entering her shop through her hearth.

"Thank you. Your husband told me as much." Seraph said

"You did not specify a color for the shirt you wanted completed so I made a black one, as you wanted the most of those, I believe." She said, as she handed him a bundle of clothing. Seraph put the shirt on and enlarged his trunk, placing the rest of the bundle in one of the compartments.

"The shirt fits excellently, thank you. I will be back here within a few days to pick the rest up. How much do I owe you?" Seraph asked, taking out his money pouch.

"Oh, well let's see..." she said as she began making numbers in the air, after a moment she finally came to a conclusion and said "That will be 1,800 galleons. The extra demiguise hair was an extra 400 galleons by itself, and Acromantula silk adds an extra 20 galleons to an articles price. But these clothes will be worth every Knut, I promise." Seraph pulled out the correct amount and stacked it up on the table. The galleons came out in rolls, not unlike muggle rolls of change, though these were noticeably longer and much heavier, wrapped in a cloth like paper material with the Gringotts seal appearing periodically.

"I understand that you are the Black Heir?" She asked, her hesitation barely audible.

"Yes..." Seraph said slowly, as he saw her aura change to a cautious yellow.

"Then I suppose it is my duty to inform you that one of your late charges came through while you were talking to my husband earlier in my shop. Mrs. Mal-, well I suppose that would be Ms. Black now, anyway, she came through the muggle entrance of my shop seeking sanctuary. Apparently, she has been disowned and therefore does not have access to the stipends she received before. In the eyes of her husband, Lucius, this is enough reason to kill her. He will be punished for his lack of funds to his Master, and Lucius would take it out on her, slowly. So she came to me. I have sent her to stay at the Luna Argentum, it is an Inn that resides in the Knocturn sub-alley division. It is run by a friend of mine, Vesta. I tell you this because I believe that you have a right to know, and because I think that you can help her. She is not a bad person, really, just a victim of circumstance, for the most part. She has been a good friend for many years now, and I would appreciate it if you would at least speak with her." Mistress Clotho asked with a pleading tone evident.

Seraph considered it for a moment. If what she said was true, then Narcissa was hiding out in the slums of Knocturn, and would be killed

if sighted by her husband. 'She was married to Malfoy for years, so she must know things about the Death Eaters that not many are privy to. And if Malfoy found her worthy, then she may be talented in some way, ways that may help me perhaps? For the information alone, I would speak with her, and as she is disowned, I am not obligated to help her in any way. This may work.' Seraph thought.

"I will speak with her." He said. She nodded, a strained smile showing though.

"I would suggest that you conceal that ring of yours though. Once word gets out that there is a new Black Heir, it will stir the public up. It was known that Sirius was the Head of the Blacks and thought to have not produced an Heir, and for one to show up out of the blue, with no ones knowledge, well, the public will not take it well, I fear. Not to mention that Lucius and Bellatrix will hunt you down for their perceived wrongs you have done to them." Clotho informed him.

"Thank you, that is a good idea. But even if Bella and Lucy did come after me, I doubt they would succeed. They didn't before. Lets go, you traitor." Seraph growled, as he shrunk his trunk and walked out of the shop, leaving a slightly confused seamstress something to ponder.

Ooo  
ooO

"Some companion you are, jumping ship the first opportunity." Seraph admonished. Cheleb whined for a second before sniffing some new scent and seeming to forget the ordeal.

"Come on." Seraph said, as he moved into a small recess in the alley. "Ring, is there a way for you to conceal yourself?" Seraph asked, as he could not remember a concealing spell, something he would remedy some time soon.

"Yes, Master Black. If it is your wish, then I can remain hidden." The ringtold him, as the crest of the ring slowly vanished, leaving a simple silver band on his finger. Satisfied, he began to concentrate on the changes he wanted his face to make. His eyes opened up more then were usual and changed into a clear orange outlined in black where



the silver was before, slightly reminiscent of Vulcan. His facial hair suddenly jumped into a full beard, before he concentrated again and turned it into a smooth goatee. His hair shortened and grouped together to form full spikes which were the same deep auburn at the tips that was seen sporadically through his raven hair. 'I'll have to look into this. Tonks is a Black, which means that she must have a natural ability to be able to change, and she looks like she has to concentrate pretty hard before a change happens, and all I have to do is think about how I want to look. I don't think it should be this easy.' Seraph thought as he stepped out into the rest of the alley.

It was interesting to note the way that the people on the street regarded him as he stepped out of the shadowed corner. He was now looked at with caution, instead of disdain, which suited him fine. He didn't feel like socializing just now. 'Occhio's eye-care' came into view as he passed a hag who was trying to sell him rotten magpie liver for seven knuts a half-ounce.

Entering the store he was greeted by a bright room and a ringing of bells that were hovering close to the door. The room was set up much like the muggle Optometrists that he had been to once before, when the school made the Dursley's buy glasses for him when he could not see that there were written letters on the board. He was quickly enrolled into another school, but the damage had been done. The Dursley's were embarrassed, and they made sure he knew it.

"Hello, may I help you?" A cultured voice asked him from behind a counter.

"Yes, I saw the sign and figured that this would be the place to find out about eye correction." Seraph answered.

"Well, as you can see, we have several styles of eye glasses to choose from. Each pair is made to be unbreakable and the lenses will be set to your prescription after you have purchased them. The prescription will last for a year before you have to have them set again or choose another pair." The lady told him.

“Really, well I have used glasses previously; still do as a matter of fact. But I find them cumbersome and a weakness, something I simply can not afford. So, Ms. ...”

“Madame Occhio.” She supplied.

“Oh, so I do have the pleasure of speaking with the esteemed Madame Occhio. Your reputation in your business was heralded by a friend of mine. I am looking for something to ‘let me see the world in a new perspective’, so to speak.” Seraph finished, looking her in the eyes.

“Your friend, Mr. ...” Madame Occhio prompted.

“Noir, Sinistre Noir. And I speak of Mr. Vulcan. He holds you in high standing in your field.”

“Ah, Mr. Vulcan sent you, he was a good friend of my mother’s. To have his trust says much about you. Very well, come with me.” She said as she tapped a pair of glasses on the right lens in an unintelligible pattern until a room opened up to the side. “You, Mr. Noir, are one of the few to get to see this side of the store. This is where the ‘magic’, so to speak, happens. Magical advancements in eye enhancement have come far from say, Alastor ‘Mad-eye’ Moody’s day. My mother actually outfitted him for that eye about twenty years ago, maybe less. Now though, we have other options, that is, dependant upon how much gold you are willing to part with for your ‘new world perspective’.” Occhio said.

“Money is no object, Madame I assure you. Tell me of these options.” And she did. Over the course of the next ten minutes Seraph learned about a type of liquid contact lens derived from the muggle equivalent that would adhere to the eye and could be made to give certain, advantages in eyesight. There was also a potion that would destroy the zonules (“threads” attached to the lens of the ciliary muscle that help the lens to change its curvature during movement), retinas (membrane that lines the inside wall of the eye, changes light into sight, tells the brain what you see), and the lens of the eye completely and restructure them until they were better then what they should be, slightly better then 20/20. Then there was total eye replacement, not

unlike Moody's, except that there was an illusion of your eye remaining straight while it was behind your head. The eye replacement and liquid-lens could be charmed to see better at night, see through simple illusions and a few more advanced illusions, namely Invisibility cloaks. The reconstruction process could not be enhanced any further then it already was. One, because you cannot charm a real eye, it is much too sensitive, too much or too little power to the spell or an incorrect movement and you can have irreparable damage, and two, Madame Occhio was not willing to perform enhancement rituals on her self, let alone another. The reconstruction process included an amazing bit of potions, but no amount of gold would get her out of Azkaban for acts forbidden centuries earlier, the Madame told him.

"I'll take the Reconstruction Potion." He informed her. He figured that if there were rituals for eye enhancement, then he could do them, and possibly get much better results.

"Are you sure now? Alright, but to warn you, it will hurt like a bitch. The first part will sever the connection of your eyes to your brain, rendering you blind. Then you'll feel the pain. The zonules will be burned out, and then retinas will be scraped off, then the really fun part. The lenses of your eyes will be ripped and disintegrate to nothing, leaving your eyes open for a moment. It is fast though, otherwise you would risk infection. After that, the process starts over again, only backwards. The lenses rebuild themselves, the retinas are developed and fill in, and then the zonules regenerate and attach themselves to your eyes. Finally the connection is reestablished and viola, perfect vision for the rest of your life, regardless of age. Unless your eyes need to be replaced at some point, of course." She reassured him.

Seraph studied her aura for a moment, and finding no hostility, agreed to the procedure. She walked over to a low hanging shelf and picked up a vile of a murky neon brown colored potion, as odd as it may sound, and handed it to him.

"Now, unless you have tried poly-juice, you won't find any potion that tastes as bad as this. And even then, it is in a class of its own. It has something to do with the dragon mushroom spores. They can only be

harvested under dragon dung. Anyway, down it in one go. It should only last about a minute.” She told him, as she walked back up to the front of the store through the now illusion wall.

‘Gulp’, was the sound that he involuntarily made as the potion slid down his throat, fighting the whole way down. As Seraph felt the substance settle down in his stomach, his vision began to go blurry, before suddenly switching off. That’s when the pain started. It was not all that bad actually. Of course, few who had not had the ‘Cruciatus’ could call this ‘not all that bad’. It was like a hot needle stuck into his eye, and then scraping with a dull spoon, before being punched in the eyes with a sledge hammer. During this time however, his scanning ability had expanded to take place of his vision, allowing him to almost ‘see’ the ambient magic in the room (A/N: think along the lines of ‘The Matrix’ and Frodo’s vision when he puts on the ring), giving everything a misty grey and red color, like he was colorblind, though a few definite shapes and colors could be seen, more specifically, Madame Occhio who was colored brightly in warm hues. His vision returned after a moment, though the ‘sight’ still remained for a few seconds, making everything an odd shadow. The clarity of his sight now was unbelievable, and he wondered how he could have walked around being nearly blind all his life, even with the aide of glasses.

“All finished I see. Come up to the front, I’ll ring you up there.” Madame Occhio told him.

“Okay, the total will come to 800 galleons. Steep, yes, but well worth it. And I am sure you would agree. I usually ask for payment up front, but with the potion, I feel better having not taken your money in the event of your death.” She told him in all seriousness. Seraph shook his head and handed her the money from out of his Gringotts bag and thanked Madame Occhio for her help.

“No problem. As a matter of fact, why don’t you pick out a pair of those sunglasses over there?” She pointed to a rack near the door. “Your eyes may be a little sensitive to sunlight for a couple of hours. Take them, no charge.” She said. Nodding his thanks, he picked out a pair of deep red tinted rectangular glasses that said that the tint could be changed if they were tapped by a wand, and walked out to

an even dirtier Knocturn alley then before, thanks to his newly fixed eyes.

“Next stop, ‘Borgin and Burkes’”. Seraph growled to Cheleb who had been hidden beside him the whole time while in Occhio’s.

Ooo  
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Entering the dusty entrance of ‘Borgin and Burkes’, Seraph concentrated on what he was seeing and tried to bring up that ‘sight’ again. He could sense someone, most likely either Borgin, Burkes, or some other clerk behind the counter, but he also felt a slight pull towards a jewelry cabinet. Following the feeling, he found himself in front of a large finger ring, clumsily made out of what appeared to be gold, though it could have easily been made of copper, set with a black stone engraved with an ancient looking coat of arms. The feeling returned, and now he recognized what it was, and it made him cautious. The ring gave off the same feeling that Riddle’s diary had given off.

“Can I help you?” Came the annoyed voice of the clerk Seraph had sensed earlier.

“Yes, what can you tell me of this ring?” Seraph asked, feeling like the man was already getting on his nerves.

“That ring? No idea why any one would want it really. It was found in some destroyed house some time back. Fellow brought it in, saying that it was a Slytherin artifact. Don’t know how he could tell, but I bought it off of him for a Knut just to get the man out of my store. We did have a Slytherin artifact at one point, quite a few years back, nice locket it was. That was bought by Ms. Somebody Smith not to long after it was brought in. Terrible what happened to her.” Mr. Borgin, for that was who he was, told him, not quite understanding why he should be so open to a stranger, of all things, in his shop.

“I’ll take it.” Seraph told the man, thinking that even if it was a fake, something that felt that way should not be out lying around somewhere, and he still needed something to buy in order to do other

business with this man. "And the 'Man has been keeping me down', I would be interested in any way you may have in the purpose to get him off my back."

"Why sir, I do believe that I could help you, and myself..." he mumbled the last bit, but Seraph still heard it. "Just right this way." The man said with a greedy glint in his eye and a greasy voice that would have put Snape's hair to shame. "I'm Mr. Borgin, by the way." Borgin said, as he began waving his wand in a series of circular movements with some muttered words until a trapdoor opened up. Borgin shot a pale bolt at his front door and several locks could be heard slamming into place, as well as an odd slurping sound. Studying peoples aura's had become second nature to Seraph in the short time he had began to utilize the ability, and seeing an odd color he could only associate with feeling the man gave off, he discovered that 'greed' had a color, a 'muddy pink' of all the possible hues.

"Now what is it that you are looking for Sir?" Borgin asked.

"I want what the Ministry won't let us know. Like those neat different means of travel, that interesting charm to make people go away, and anything else of interest that you may have. Gold is not a problem." Seraph told the greasy man.

"Gold is no problem is it? Well that is very, very good. Well let's see here... 'Mezzi di movimento by Juan Libro', a book on Apparition basics and advanced techniques, not the hardest book to procure around here, but difficult to master. 'Travel, Tricks and Trade; Ministry banned spells, items, and knowledge, and how to make them work for you'. This has everything else you might want to know, Portkey creation, Oblivation basics, hell of a hard spell to use let me tell you, muggle and wizard repelling wards, Flying carpet creation, you name it, if the ministry has banned it, this book will tell you how to use it or make it. I have the 'The Untraceable Book of Untraceability'somewhere, but I could never find it... oh well. A couple of books that no one can decipher, no matter how powerful the translation charm they use, been in the shop for ages. One has squiggly text, the others text looks runic, but the words keep changing in different lighting, making it impossible to determine. I have amulets, protection jewelry, hell; I even got a time-turner someplace. Take a

look around, I'm bound to have whatever you want." The man finished, stepping out of the way while rubbing his hands together.

Seraph picked up 'Mezzi di movimento by Juan Libro', the book on Ministry banned knowledge, a comprehensive genealogy book that was self updating, and an amulet that could be charged with up to three spells, in case you lost your wand, just because it looked interesting and it had the potential to be something more.

'Time-turner...I wonder how much time it would take to learn all that I wish to learn. I mean, three months is not a whole lot of time, especially when I want to perform a lot of rituals, and I don't know how long those might take. I will definitely need Occlumency to keep Bumble-Man out of my head. Damn. I wonder if there are alternate ways to get more time.' Seraph thought, as he picked up the books the man said he could not translate and added them to his pile. Maybe he could work them out later or something.

"Mr. Borgin, what do you have here in the way of making the most of time? You see, I find myself needing more than what is available to me at present. You mentioned a turner, but I think I will need more than the few hours that can offer me."

"More time you say... more than my twisting trinket can offer? There are ways of course, but the knowledge is rare, and valuable, hard to find. If I had such knowledge, why exactly would I want to part with it? There are many out there who might be interested, and you are just a boy, what can you possibly-" But Borgin was cut off when he found a blade at his throat, and a large dog he had not previously noticed bearing its rather large teeth at him.

"Why Mr. Borgin, I do believe you were doing so well, for a greedy bastard anyway. You see, I don't take well to being looked down upon, and I don't like condescending people, and Cheleb here doesn't like anybody that I don't like, so its understandable that they don't tend to live long around me. Now I was going to be nice, I was going to buy your items at whatever price that you named, no questions asked. But you had to push it. And now, you'll be lucky if I leave you with all of your limbs after this meeting." Seraph threatened him, his current orange eyes flashing like fire. It was mostly a bluff,

scare the man till he pissed his pants, get the books and such at a good price, and make him get rid of that damn glint of greed in his beady little eyes.

“O-of course, S-s-sir. I have a-a book, ancient it is, that may be what you a-are looking for. I-it is called ‘Chrono Potentia’. The n-name translates to ‘Time Power’. I my self have n-n-not read it, it will not open for me, but it has been in here since the store was established by my great Grandfather Borgin and his friend Burke. I do not know from where they got the book, and I-I really would rather not know.” Borgin said, trying his best to hide the fear that he felt.

“Very well, I will take the book and what I have here. I will meet you up front.” Seraph informed the man, as he began to climb the stairs to the main store. “Cheleb, if he tries anything, make sure he thinks twice before pulling something again.” Seraph told Cheleb, as he put his Tanto back into its sheath. Cheleb nodded and melted away from sight, most likely going to keep an eye on Borgin.

A few minutes later found Borgin climbing up the stairs, Cheleb in tow, with a rather dusty tome in his dirty hands.

“Alright sir, I have the book here, plus the other items, lets see, amulet, ring and... the books no one can read, well I suppose they may be worth something if you could figure them out... okay, that will be... 800 galleons.” Borgin said hand outstretched. Obviously, some time alone had given the man more of a backbone.

“I don’t think so. How do you feel about 250 galleons?” Seraph asked the greedy bastard, though it was in no way a question. Really, they were an amulet, and a few books. Although the books were rare, but they were certainly not worth 800 galleons, and the ring looked it was wrought from something found lying on the ground, not some precious metal. And unless the Time book was exceptionally useful, he was asking a bit much.

“I am sorry sir. But the price is 800 galleons.” The dumbass insisted.

“Look Borgin, it is like I told you before, I don’t like you, so the price is whatever the fuck I say it is, unless you want to lose you balls today.



People like you make me sick; I'd be doing the world a favor if I made sure you would not pass on any progeny. I will pay you 250 galleons, no more." Borgin grumbled for a moment, before suddenly quieting and agreeing to the price. His aura outline, however was flashing danger in neon colors. "Cheleb, he is going to try something. Make sure he regrets ever thinking about it.." Seraph growled, making Borgin look around to see where the dog was.

"Here, 250 galleons." Seraph said, as he threw the money onto the counter and picked up his stuff which had been placed into a bag. Just as he was about to unlock the door, he heard a man stutter 'C-cruci-' before a deafening scream. It seems that Mr. Borgin will not be using his wand in the near future, as he had just lost several fingers on his right hand. Nor would he be procreating, as Cheleb had decided on following Seraph's threat. "Nice one Cheleb." He told the grim, as he began scratching the large animal behind the ears, as Borgin screamed on.

"You know Borgin, I think I'll try that spell you mentioned earlier." Seraph told the screaming man as he quickly pulled out the Ministry book and turned it to the Obliviation Charm. Scanning it quickly, he pulled out his wand, concentrated on wanting to remove his face and any sight of Cheleb from his memory, and shouted 'Obliviate!' with all the force he could muster, remembering Borgin saying that the charm was hard to perform. The man looked blankly at his hand for, before his eyes darted around quickly, before his eyes settled for a second time on his bleeding appendages, before screaming once again. His job done, Seraph cast a quick 'Silencio' that shut the man up as he and Cheleb made their way back out to the alley, not knowing that the man couldn't remember his own name, let alone recall seeing a man and a dog.

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'Eyes are fixed, I have what I wanted from 'Borgin and Burkes', clothes are taken care of. Wand, up to date books, potions and ritual supplies and appliances are all I think that I need now. The appliances can wait, as can the potions and such, I can get them later if I am going to be living around here, and I don't know what I need

any way and I am sure they will need to be fresh. I need to find Knocturn Corner too. A watch would not hurt either. I don't know what time it is, I can probably find one around here or in Diagon.' Seraph thought as he began to wonder down the streets, wary of those around him. They stopped at a small, surprisingly sanitary canteen where they served dragon steaks and elf-drops, a drink made of firewhiskey and glacial tears. Seraph decided not to imbibe in the odd drink in favor of keeping his wits, something he could not afford to lose in this place. The steak was good, but Cheleb refused to eat it unless it was rare. Leaving the establishment, Seraph spotted a sign of what could have been a wand pointing down an alley to the side hanging above an empty shop. Not sensing anything bad down that way, he made his way down the alley to be met with a dead end and another sign. 'Dexter's' was all that it said. He opened the door and walked through.

"Who is it that does disturb my keep?" asked a wizened voice from a back room.

"One who wishes to do business with the keeper." Seraph replied, wondering if there was some sort of password phrase that he was supposed to know for this man too. Several crashes could be heard from the back room as the man made his way to the front of the shop. The shop was dark, but not unclean. Not unlike Ollivander's, but slightly less inviting. The man that came out had to be a relative of Ollivander. He had the same demeanor, and those eyes. Those eerie, moon-like eyes were giving Seraph flashbacks of his first wand buying experience.

"My, my, now what do we have here? A Grim... which makes you its companion," The man said looking to Seraph. "This in turn must make you the Heir of Black." He stated. Seraph, though he fought hard not to show it, was surprised that the man had figured him out, and had seen Cheleb, who was behind him and currently blended into the shadows. He tried to see the man's aura, but he was unable to, which prompted him to grab his wand quickly and begin to back out of the shop.

"Now, now. No need for that. I have certain talents, talents which I see you possess, though they are untrained. You attempted to read

my aura, but were unable to yes? I too am a Scanner, and as such know how to hide my aura. It is called Masking, an advanced technique that you can learn. Works well with Occlumency too... Yes, now what is it that I can help you with?" The man asked.

"Yeah, I am in need of a wand, and I heard that you are as good as or better than Ollivander." Seraph told him.

"As good as or better than Ollivander, eh? Yes, I suppose that would be high praise indeed, but I suppose my dear brother may well be better than me, if he was not limited to what he can use in his wands. It doesn't matter how much they give him, Unicorn tail hairs, Dragon heart strings, and phoenix feathers are too limited, no matter the diversity of wood. But he, like all of the Ollivander's that have worked in that shop adhere to the Ministries guidelines, though they use not to be so rigid. He likes the shop though, especially when the new first years come in to get their first wands. He said that that alone was worth the restrictions. Damn crazy I tell you. Having to deal with all those snot nose hooligans, and overly biased idiots, blah!" He said with a dismissive wave of his arm. "And yes, that would make me an Ollivander. I am Dexter Ollivander, at your service." The man, Dexter Ollivander, said. Seraph had thought as much so it was not a total surprise.

"Why are those cores too limited?" Seraph asked after a moment. After all, he had not had any problems with his wand, except the whole Voldemort thing.

"Because, even if you were to find a wand that was compatible with you, that 'chose you', as my brother would say, it can not compare to a custom made wand, a wand that your magic itself has chosen the components of. Close to thirty percent of the magic that is put into a spell is lost upon firing it from an already made wand, more if the wand was not theirs to begin with. The worst part is that the Ministry knows this. It use to be that those wands were known as 'Training-Wands', they were made to slightly inhibit the caster, forcing more power into spells, building up their magical core. After graduation, they would purchase their first custom wand with their first month's wages. It was a tradition that lasted up until the last century and a quarter, about 1870, when the Ministry decided that any one with

more power than them was a threat, magical or otherwise. So they banned key components used in custom wand creation so they could not be made again, along with several of the legal dark spells and a slew of items and books that nearly ruined a couple shops under the 'Light Act of 1871'." Dexter explained.

"That sounds like something that the Ministry would do. I am just surprised that it was never mentioned before. I mean there are people that are old enough to remember, or even have a custom wand. Dumbledore is over 150 years old, surely he would know about it..." Seraph trailed off, while Dexter gave him a knowing grin. "Just one more way Dumbles can make sure that everyone flocks to his banner, because no one can defeat them on their own because they are inhibited by wands that wont work as well as they can, making them weaker then their enemies from go. And even if some of them knew about it, they would not do anything illegal, or risk persecution from their overly judgmental peers."

"Precisely. That is once of the many reasons that I don't like the man, and why a few of the older families who had been getting custom wands for countless years do not see eye to eye with him, or at least some of them use that as an excuse to disagree with him, as he is in a position to change laws like that. Now, you will want to get I wand, I gather from your earlier statement. The first thing that must be done is to choose a wood type. You feel each of the pieces I have, and you tell me the one that feels the best." Dexter said as he went to the back room to return a moment later with a large box. Opening the box revealed several levels of cabinets, each holding a number of thin wood pieces. Seraph began picking up the pieces, one by one. The first few did nothing for him, a few after that made him mildly queasy, some felt better then others, some even shocked him, but none felt right. That is until he came to the last level. Seraph picked up a heavy piece of dark wood that almost looked like marble, especially with its light silvery veins and high sheen.

"This one." Seraph told Dexter.

"Curious..." was all that the wand-maker said, annoyingly like the man's brother. "Moving on, we must pick the cores. I never use less then two. Makes the wand more powerful and it helps to more

efficiently use the magic that is given. Now over to the side,” He pointed to the wall across from him. “Are the liquid cores, look through those while I take these back and bring out the other cores. Just feel them out.” Dexter told Seraph.

Seraph walked over to the shelves and began to concentrate on trying ‘see’ what he was looking for, the way he had before. After a moment, colors began to show up on some items and the magic could be felt from the substances before him. He felt a slight pull from one of the jars on the shelf and one from behind him. The jar that he felt the pull from was filled with a black gaseous liquid that seemed to still be alive. Picking up the jar, he turned around and looked to where he felt the second pull, expecting to see Dexter with the other cores. What he found was Cheleb sitting on the floor with his tongue out looking up at him.

“What have you found so far?” The Ollivander sibling asked.

“This jar,” he held up the jar to show him, not looking away from Cheleb, “And I am feeling a pull from my companion. Why is that?” Seraph asked.

“Well let’s see the jar first... Lethifold blood, my, my. That is not something used often. And the reason why you are feeling a pull from your companion is because he is a magical creature, and as such, some part of him can be used as a wand core, crudeness aside. Though I have never seen a Grim be compatible for a core before. You will have to ask for something, as I doubt he would appreciate you taking something of him without permission. Take a look at these cores first though. It is not often I make wands with more than two cores, but it happens, and I love a challenge.”

Once again Seraph reached out to try and find another core from the ones Dexter had presented him. After a second he picked up a small container and gave it to Dexter.

“Japanese Shinobi Dragon heart-strings. This is shaping up to be a very interesting wand indeed... Now for the Grim...” Dexter nodded towards where the overly large puppy was laying on the floor.

“Cheleb, can you give me something of yourself to use as a wand core?” Seraph asked him.

“Wand? Like your other one? I think so... yeah, I can. I’m just about to lose this big tooth here... hold on... got it!” Cheleb said triumphantly, as a rather large tooth fell out of his mouth. Picking it up, he handed it to Dexter.

“Simply amazing. A Grim’s fang of all things. What combination... what a curious combination...” He trailed off.

“Spit it out old man, your worse then your brother. ‘Curious... Very curious...’ what is it with you Ollivanders and suspense!” Seraph bit out.

“What? Oh, come back in a bout an hour, I’ll be finished then, and I can explain my thoughts.” He told him.

Seraph left the shop grumbling about senile old men and wand cores, wondering what he was going to do for the next hour. His question was answered rather quickly as he looked up and saw an interesting sign.

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“Hey mate! Welcome to ‘Bozzy’s Magical Tattoos’. What can I do you for?” A man in his early twenties who was completely covered in tattoos every where visible up to his neck.

“I am interested in getting a tattoo. I know how the muggles do it, but I was wondering if the magical kind were different.” Seraph said.

“Yep, those muggles must enjoy them needles they use of somthin’, our potions are much better. While there are certain tattoos that you can get placed on you and charmed to move, which is most of which I got, the ones with the most meaning will be from the tribal tattoos.” The man explained.

“Which is?” Seraph prompted.

“Oh, right. That’s when you drink this potion, and it like, digs into you subconscious or something and pulls out something of meaning or something that meant something to you. Ah guy came in a couple o’ days ago and took it, ended up with lyrics to a muggle song because he said it ‘Changed his life’, or something like that. Whatever you get, it will be symbolic to a certain extent. The Native Americans, the ones who created the potion, made it act with certain ‘divinatory’ properties, so you may not know what they represent, but you will eventually, got it?”

“Yeah, that sounds good to me, how long will it take?”

“Twenty minutes for the potion to take effect, the maybe half an hour for the coloring potion you take after words, then a healing salve, all in all, a little over an hour.” He told Seraph.

“Convenient. All right, let’s do it then.”

The man went to the back and returned a couple of minutes later with two jars and a vile of an inky black potion.

“Now, take this one first,” he said indicating the inky potion, “Then this one here, then we have to put the salve on. The potion feels like a burn, so be ready.” Seraph nodded and took the vile from him and drank it down. Fortunately it was not any worse then the man described. He began to feel a throbbing burning sensation all over his back, shoulders, and forearms so he took off his cloak shirt and under vest after checking the man’s aura. A little after twenty minutes later the pain stopped and Seraph took the coloring potion, not bothering to look at the only tattoos that he could see which were on his forearms. The coloring potion was just as bad as the tribal potion, only it lasted longer and remained a constant burning instead of a throb. The tattoo guy came in just as the potion ended and began to apply the thick glowing blue healing salve, which lasted until it was absorbed by the body a couple of minutes later.

“Alright man, right over there is a mirror so that you can see what’s on you back. And check out your arms mate, they are awesome!” Tattoo man said.

Looking at his forearm, he had to agree with the man. Instead of a picture, there were ancient runes in a gothic type writing that went from his wrist to his elbow on the inside of his arm in a deep green that looked black until it hit the light, or changed hues on its own, Seraph was not sure, outlined in silver on his right arm. On his left was a large angel with black wings spread, holding a flaming black blade under the Orion constellation. The fire would go out periodically and the angel would put the blade away in a sheath and walk around his arm, always alert.

He walked to the mirror and got a good look at his back by a charm on the mirror, instead of reflecting the image like muggles would. Taking up most of his back and shoulders was a huge bear-like dog that resembled a huge Rottweiler as much as Cheleb looked like a Labrador. The dog was facing forward in mid pounce, as if he was trying to jump out of Seraph, or on to something behind him. Its eyes were a glowing silver outlined in deep emerald. And its markings, usually a light brown in color were instead silver. Through out the Grims midnight fur, the same deep auburn that could be seen in his hair was present, if one looked hard enough. Below the Grim was a full moon with dark clouds moving over it. Under the moon were a large bear-like German shepherd, a Werewolf, and a big silvery Stag. The Stag had an overly large crimson lily tucked behind its ear. Padfoot was tackling Moony into a small stream that was next to them while Prongs reared up in laughter. Seraph gave a sad half-smile as he watched their antics. He looked up to see the larger grim wink and give a feral grin before it slowly disappeared into a shadow and reappeared behind Padfoot, tackling him into the stream which sent Prongs rolling into a fit of laughter, an interesting sight in a Stag. He looked to the clock and saw that over an hour had passed and his wand should be done by now. Paying the price for the potion, 3 galleons and a sickle, he made his way back to the wand shop.

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“Mr. Black I am glad that you are back so promptly. Your wand is ready.” Dexter told him as soon as he walked through the door. The old man motioned to a beautiful wand lying on top of an aged purple



cushion. Picking it up, Seraph felt warmth at his finger tips, and a cold, refreshing breeze that seemed to clear any weariness he had away. Giving it a sharp swish, a cloud of black mist shout out of the wand, forming foggy clouds, as bright silver sparks shot out and deep red sparks which rained down and danced on the counter top.

“Yes! Yes! Bravo, Mr. Black. Petrified Black Peach wood, Japanese Shinobi Heart-strings, Grim fang, suspended in Lethifold blood. A very interesting combination, as I said before. To know why it so curious, let me tell you the history behind that particular wood and its cores.

Mr. Black, the wood of your wand is the last suitable piece of Black Peach wood that I know of. This piece came from the great Peach wood tree on a mountain called Dusu in the East Sea. The tree covered close to 3,000 square miles and was said to be the gateway that evil must pass through to go down the mountain. When a great evil broke though, it destroyed the tree, scorching the wood, turning it into Black Peach wood. The wood was used to eventually kill this evil. That is why the Chinese people believed peach wood could be used to put down evil things and began to decorate their gates with two carved deity figures made of peach wood to keep evil spirits at bay. Over the centuries the wood petrified, augmenting the wood to be more refined, more powerful. The liquid core in your wand is that of Lethifold blood, the essence of the living shroud, the perfect assassin of the night, leaving no trace of its presence with few weaknesses. A Grim’s fang. The weapon of a misunderstood creature signifying imminent death. It is said to be a guardian to the underworld, and fiercely loyal to their cause. And finally, Heart-strings from a Shinobi Dragon. A formidable dragon, noted for its concealment abilities and endurance. In fugal times they were ridden by Ninjas, those trained in the art of ninjutsu and their protectiveness of its kind and deadly temper when it is set off. Are you beginning to see what I am talking about?” Dexter asked him.

“Yes, I think I do. A powerful wand to bring the end to evil beings, though itself is not light. It seems that I can not escape my course, even if I wanted to. At least this wand will have no brother.” Seraph said.

“Brother Wand, Mr. Black? What has a brother wand to do with anything? That reminds me, I saw your wand earlier, a glimpse, but it was enough to identify it as one of my brother’s wands, but if he sold one to a young Black, I believe he would have told me.” Dexter said.

“Do I have your Wizard’s oath not to reveal anything you have heard or done for me to anyone, Mr. Ollivander?” Seraph asked.

“Certainly.” And with that simple agreement a small flare of magic flashed between them, sealing the oath.

“I will tell you then that this wand,” He said, pulling out his old wand, “Is the brother wand to one Thomas Marvolo Riddle.” Seraph told the man.

“Now that I have heard. But that would make you...” Dexter stopped, slightly surprised.

“If such a person ever existed, I was Harry James Potter. But as things are, I am Seraph Orion Black. It is a pleasure to meet you Mr. Ollivander.”

“Well now, that does make this wand special, does it not? Before I forget, that will be 17 galleons, 5 sickles, and 12 knuts. Remarkable, though it makes me wonder if this changes any prophecies circulating around...It matters not, I suppose. What will be, will be. It is not about what we wish to happen, but what we can do. It is not about what we want or desire, but what we can attain. Remember, a man can do great things, Mr. Black. And as I am sure my brother has told you, ‘We can expect great things from you’.” The old man finished, eyes glowing like moons, as if seeing something that no one else could, eerily reminiscent of his brother. Seraph nodded and paid the man and left quickly.

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‘I can get some more books, and find Knocturn Corner and Black Alley later from Vulcan, but I think I need to get back. Something does not feel right. Man, I really need a watch. I should have seen if

there were any in the vault. Well, I still have to go back there at some point to check out the Potter and Slytherin vaults, I can look then.' Seraph thought to himself as he made his way out of Knocturn alley and towards the Leaky Cauldron. 'Or I can get one now. I'll make it fast.' Seraph thought as passed 'Time-Piece'.

"What can I do... for you?" A very sleepy voice asked from behind the glass display counter holding watches. The woman who the voice belonged to looked exhausted, a line of spit connecting her lip to the glass case below.

"Yeah, I need a watch that tells the time, maybe with some extra features." Seraph told the lady. Now some would think that stating something like that would be mocking the woman, but this was the Wizarding World, and he did not want a watch that only told him lunar transition phases.

"Hmmm... I got just the thing. Muggle design, so its main function is to tell time. Press this little button, and you get the lunar and solar phases, good for potion ingredient collecting. Anti theft feature, sends a small lightening bolt at some one who tries to take it from you. The watch is unbreakable, waterproof, fireproof, and always keeps the correct time, no matter the time zone. Comes in gold, silver, gold and silver, platinum, leather band or metal, with tinted crystal faces in any color. Costs 12 galleons and a knut, what do ya' think?" The lady asked.

"Sounds good to me. I'll take it. I want the platinum with solid band and smoke tinted crystal." He told her, handing her the money.

"Okay, one second." The clerk said, opening up a hidden drawer under the case. She found it and handed it to Seraph who put it on immediately.

"Thank you." He told her as he left, noting that the time was now half-past six in the evening. He told Cheleb that to stay with Vulcan and Mistress Clotho for the night if he could, explaining that the house was small and he would pick him up the next day, or to find him if he didn't. He made it through the Leaky Cauldron and on to the Knight Bus with out incident, though he noted the absence of Stan Shunpike,

as the ditzy flaxen haired conductor was a sharp contrast to the pimply young man. 11 sickles and A little over half an our later, he was back in Little Whinging, and had the bus stop at the park down the block, as not to alert any wizards or witches in the area. He decided that he did not want the Dursley's, or any guards to see him differently then what they remembered and concentrated on what he looked like before the charm had been completely removed, changing his hair, eyes and face, and covering up his tattoos. The final thing he had to do, though he loath to do it, was to put his scar back in its proper place, though he was able to make it lighten from its angry red to a paler pink color. He took off his cloak and put it into his trunk and made his holsters invisible, not wanting to explain them, but kept everything else.

His stroll back to Number 4 Privet Drive mildly pleasant, the thought of never having to come back here after this day making him happy. He was about to open the door when it was thrust open before him, and dragged into the house.

"Where's my 'hic' money, boy?" The drunken tub of lard called his uncle asked.

"You handle me like that again and you won't have any greedy hands left." Seraph threatened.

"That uh... thr-threat boy! You threatening me? In my own house no less! You'll get yours... Dudley is making sure of it, I can just smell it in the air. Can't you, freak? Good ol' Udders, -HA! Petunia's little Udders!- er Dudders is goin to fix you right up! Proud of that boy, 'hic', always knew he had it in 'em..." Vernon trailed off as he took another drink of his Johnnie Walker. Seraph did indeed smell something in the air though. Like something was burning, and it was coming from the kitchen. That feeling of something wrong came back to him full blast, and he ran to the kitchen, to find his own personal nightmare awaiting him.

The first thing he saw was the feathers. White feathers. No, not all of them were white, a good portion had a red tint to them. 'Blood' Seraph thought. 'Feathers...Hedwig! What the hell is going on here!' The next thing he noticed was a large metal pan sitting on the table,

the kind Petunia would use to make turkey in... Beside the pan was a what looked like it had been a wing at one time. A severed wing that had been burnt almost beyond recognition.

"Nice, aint it?" a voice asked, and as the voice stepped into the room, Seraph saw that it was Dudley, his thundering walk ruining the entrance he had worked so hard to create.

"What have you done Dudley?" Seraph asked, eyes taking on the glowing of that dreaded curse, his voice a cold whisper, but Dudley heard it, and pissed himself. But he strengthened his resolve by remembering what the freak had done to his family, to him for all those years and especially recently.

"Not nearly as much as I'm gonna!" Dudley shouted as he punched Seraph in the jaw faster then he thought he could and threw a lit lighter into the pan. This act sealed the fate of one Dudley Pinguis Dursley. The lighter landed in the pan and set off the fluid that had been poured in there on top of a scarcely conscious bird. The flames set off immediately and a desperate screeching could be heard from within. Seraph ran to the pan and saw to what he had feared, Hedwig's body covered in flames. He tried to put the fire out, but it was too late. Hedwig laid there, smoking and still. Dead.

He couldn't believe it.

Hedwig. Dead. His first true friend, his first companion. Gone. The only person -for Hedwig was no mere bird- who had always been there for him. Through the nightmares, and when his friends would not send him letters, when she was locked up with him in their own personal jails, when the wizarding world turned on him. Always there for an encouraging nip or a bite on the ear to set him straight. Always there. And now, nothing.

Everything slowed down at that point. The leaves moved slower, the sounds of the outside came a little bit deeper, and Dudley seemed frozen in time. Dudley. The one who killed her. The one who tormented him. The one who had taken the one thing he loved the most in his life, and crushed it, just because he could. A cold calm came over Seraph, relieving him of his pain, his hurt. Leaving only

cold fury. His eyes were now glowing grimly, the killing curse green being overshadowed by molten silver as a shiver ran through his spin, ending at his fingertips, which now held a black flaming sword. Quicker than lightning, the blade was through Dudley's arm, severing the limb and incinerating it by the heat of the flame. Where his arm once was held only a cauterized shoulder stump.

(A/N: If you were looking for the change, ↓ this is it.)

"Eye for an eye, Dudders." Seraph said frostily, as he pulled out flicked his wrist and his new wand jumped out. "Incendio!" he shouted, feeling the magic within him flare and shot out a dark blue fireball at his cousin's feet. It exploded and set his feet on fire. Dudley fell to his knees, while the fire slowly crept up his body. How he managed to stay on his knees until the fire reached his shoulders, Seraph did not know, nor did he really care. "Exitium!" Seraph yelled, thinking about how exactly he wanted his cousin's body to be destroyed. The curse that he had read about earlier in the year stuck the target's chest and exploded on impact, turning his body into assorted smoldering limbs and burning entrails, blood splattering the walls and ceiling. The fury left him and he put away his wand and the Black Katana disappeared.

He walked slowly over to Hedwig's body to hold her, still in disbelief. As soon as he touched her though, she fell into ashes. And he did something he hoped he would never do again. He cried. He cried silent tears for the injustice of it all. Because another loss made him feel that much weaker. And as the tears fell from his face, they landed on the ashes of his friend. His aura flared in response, showing a truly beautiful and deadly black and silver aura, thrashing wildly against anything it could find. Wind ripped through the house, blowing everything about or shattering it. Then a fire, a cold fire began to engulf him. The black flames licked at his flesh, but he did not feel it, but his surroundings did, as they caught on fire, still that black and grey colored fire. Then a sound. A sound the likes of which had not been heard for centuries. A music that would strike fear into enemies, and reassurance to allies. A sound that carried both victory and loss, of death and life, the fires of hell and the flames of comfort. As the sound reached its crescendo, Vernon and Petunia's screams could be heard easily, as blood seeped out of their ears. And with a mighty flash, the ashes that once were Hedwig began to float

together, losing their tangibility and forming a dark misty shape. The mist was undeniably Hedwig, but it wasn't at the same time, it was like when he saw Cedric, his parents, and that old man come out of Voldemort's wand in the graveyard. It was her spirit. But it wasn't of an owl.

Seraph looked up at the spirit of the magnificent creature that was now floating before him. A phoenix. But it was unlike any he had ever seen before, black as night, tainted from her pain and that of her masters. She trilled a soft note, and then a louder one, before she began to become consumed by dark flames and flew straight into his chest. He gave a sad smile before passing into oblivion. This was the scene that met Remus and Tonks as they made their way through the entrance of Number 4 Privet Drive.

"What happened Remus? The burning, and the, the body parts! Was that his cousin? Where are his Aunt and Uncle? What the hell is going on?" Tonks asked faster than Remus thought possible, her head was spinning, trying not to look at anything but taking everything in at the same time.

"I don't know what happened Tonks. And I don't think we will get the answers until Harry is awake. That does indeed look like his cousin though. Like he was blasted apart and then set on fire. There are curses that will do that, but they are, well, less messy, more precise. I have a thought, but first I have to find Hedwig and see to Harry." Remus told her, climbing the stairs to where he knew Harry's room to be. He found his trunk, still mostly packed with a few books strewn around his bed and nightstand. An empty cage and a cleaned cauldron were the only other things of interest.

Remus just sighed, knowing that with the lack of owl and large burnt up basting pot, his thought was probably correct. He went to Seraph and checked his vital signs, then tried to 'enervate' him, but was unable to. Tonks returned a moment later, saying that both Harry's Aunt and Uncle were dead, blood flowing out of their ears with looks of pain on their faces.

"Bloody hell I hate being right sometimes. Well, he smells odd, different, but that is Harry alright. He looks like he passed out from

something, magical exhaustion perhaps, might explain why everything not burnt is destroyed and he will not wake up. I think that he left sometime today, the smell of the Knight bus is still strong, so he must have returned recently. I think that his cousin wanted to get some revenge or something and killed Hedwig. Probably right in front of Harry too.”

“So you think Harry did this?” Tonks asked disbelief evident in his voice.

“Yes, I am sure of it. I doubt anything less than Hedwig’s death would set him off like this.”

“Even if he did this to his cousin, that doesn’t explain his relatives though.” Tonks pointed out.

“No, it doesn’t. But if I am right in my belief that this all a result of his cousin killing Hedwig, then it can be explained. We don’t see Hedwig here. Harry may not have completed a familiar ritual, but their bond was just as deep, and when a familiar dies, their soul and body depart, staying only long enough to see their master, one last time. Where their soul goes from there is a secret only their master knows. Sometimes, if the familiar was killed, as we have here, they take their vengeance out on their killers or those who harmed their masters. Harry took his cousin out of that equation, leaving the rest of his relatives. You see the outcome.” Remus said, leaning heavily against the kitchen door frame.

“I need to get back to Grimmauld Place. I am sure Dumbledore will know that something has happened and will check on it immediately, then the rest of the Order will be here soon. He will most likely think it was a Death Eater attack. When were you supposed to be back on guard duty and how are your Occlumency shields?” Remus asked.

“In about half an hour and they’re not bad. Why?”

“Because since you were to be on guard duty, they will probably ask you what happened. There were others leaving with us, they would tell Dumbledore that you left with them, and since you were



scheduled, he will assume that you got here early, but were still too late to stop the attack.” Remus said.

“And Harry? They would have taken him if I was too late. What if Harry fought them off and they left when I showed up? That might explain the magical exhaustion to them, and I doubt that if it was an attack, that they would send too many. Probably a couple of inner circle members and a rookie or two.” Tonks said, still thinking.

“That might work. We will have to get Harry’s story before they do though, and give him ours. I just hope that he has at least some occlumency shields, or he knows not to look him in the eye. You should alert Dumbledore for good measure. I gotta go.” Remus said as he popped out of existence.

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( ; )- In the Goblet of Fire movie, the Death Eaters are shown as KKK, only in black suits. I had not seen the connection between the Death Eaters and them until then.

Alright! Done with that chapter. I don't think I will be able to top it again. Over 11,000 words. I would break it up into smaller ones, but I had already done that, otherwise it would have been close to 16,000. I hope you guys and gals enjoyed it. Finally, Knocturn Alley. Next chapter, I hope, will be Seraph meeting the council people a bit early.

To all those who wanted Hedwig to live, sorry. Especially sorry since in the first version of this chapter, she lived. I hadn't planned on her living when I started, but I wanted to please my readers. Having done so, I find that I don't have a place for her in the story, so I went with my back up. Hope people aren't too disappointed, but my story, I'll write it as I see fit. I try to incorporate reviewer ideas as much as possible, when there given, but 'Pheonix Hedwig' didn't fit, and I think that I made a nice compromise their.

To the reviewers:

UldAses/ Heather/ AzureSky123/ schmanski/feartheturtle35 /mauripendragon/ solar1/Maben00/ AlphaPhi/ Blue Werewolf Boy/ jbfritz/Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ray and Matt are so all mine/ HarrygoestoHollywood/ Shadowed Rains/ gaul1/ Salena Snape/bandgsecurtiyaw/fanficfreak35/CirceVisigoth/Kaveman/gaul1/j bfriz/shadowwalker2/superb/Matt101/ThrainTalonwater/hilarydilarydo c/AzureSky123/Voldemortsunderstudy/Zaxxon/alen/bandgsecurtiyaw/ RexMeino/SalenaSnape/DarkWolfYingFa/Zevrillion/imgonnadie/snow fox2000/richard a lake/Kazua/firelordeg/OdinMage ApocSM Phntm-Phnx yuiop jabarber69 Kyrissean Angelis Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ra... Lady FoxFire prutser bandgsecurtiyaw darkgryffin MatTer79 dumblefck76 Never Odd Or even highbrass Heart Mind Soul Digi Bonds imgonnadie Zevrillion Silat'r fallenAngel2389 Mcshnee the Triscuit Oxygen Kiss Schwinpt rlmess souls Shyposter Just Me Prime Xyverz Fear-of-Real-Life slashslut zafaran Queen of the Storms Helltanz98 Caddy94 WashedOut slayerstoryguy Maxennce

icedragon925 MysterioX Ravenfur TheWiseSirlvanTheShadowLord Eowyn23 ApocSM Barby-Black Anime-Ronin satyr-oh Killer916 Ugly Duckling the dark icon writers Neurotic Cat Goddess bandgsecurtiyaw jbfritz CastusAlbusCor xyvortex Zevrillion gaul1 FairyQilan Maxennce Sky 05 coldfiredragon Shadowed Rains shadow of the black abyss japanesegirl102 PsychoSpiff Marikili68 TenshiZujin Just Me Prime Tree Flower Akira Stridder DragonFoxy Dirbatua Theboss996 wavefunction Shadow King77 Zero Legacy ariachan85 v v Queen Victoria Rkhiara IrishLass6 Syfes Queen of the Storms Alexandria Lily Potter sirius009 WebGuy Caliko zafaran Jensindenial3516 Junky

Junky: Thanks

Lady FoxFire: Always a pleasure to hear from Miss Foxfire. I'll keep that in mind. The names of some of the god's and goddesses' fit what I want the characters to represent, in trade or personality.

Firelordeg: Thanks, and I'll try.

Shadowed Rains: Thanks

ivan the terrible: Yep, and you see what he got for messing with him.

Fear Of Apathy: Thanks, I try to be original, but some of the cliché just work to well. Fun to twist around though.

Saetan: Thanks, nice name.

snape504: Glad you like it.

Imgonnadie: My muse pulled through spectacularly. Well, if people like the chapter that is. Otherwise it is back in to the recesses of my mind for that muse.

Xyverz: Thanks, and it has been fixed, I am pretty sure.

Silver Pard: If it fits somewhere, I will definitely use that.

ThunderGod: She doesn't live. Sorry about that. I had to change what I had before, she just didn't fit where I was heading.

## Chapter 10: More meetings and Choices

Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore was sitting at his desk, reading the Ministry's account of the Department of Mysteries break-in. 'Fudge is just as incompetent as he was before. Reassuring, I suppose. Shows that some things never change. I do wonder who doctored this report though. No mention of Harry or his little band of associates, nor does it say anything about Voldemort returning. While the world remains at risk not knowing that He has returned, I am sure I can work this to my advantage...'

His thoughts were cut off however by a silver instrument that had been repaired a few days ago, twirling and puffing a dark blue smoke at a frantic rate. 'What now? That is to the wards on Privet Drive...but that would mean the wards have fallen, indicating an attack, and that is simply impossible, I put those wards on myself. They could not be broken unless either Harry left, or they were... let in by one of the Dursleys.' Dumbledore thought, as he quickly pulled out a small pocket watch, which was beeping at him, flashing letters moving just above the glass.

"Attack...Privet Drive... Harry unconscious..." The words flashed by quickly, as he closed the watch, looking to a mirror on the wall which was also tied into the wards. The mirror was showing basic vital signs of all those in the house, in this case 5 people, one more than there should have been, possibly whoever had sent the message, Tonks most likely as it was her duty tonight. Two of the five showed unmoving red lines, indicating that whoever it belonged to was dead. Another was a moving broken black line, something Dumbledore had not seen yet from his mirror. The fourth was hazy reddish, indicating death by unusual means. The fifth was green, showing a regular healthy individual, though the pulse was high. Putting the watch away, he took out his wand and muttered 'Contego Foro Portus', and grabbed the now fiercely glowing quill he had pointed at. Feeling like he had been punched in the stomach, Dumbledore portkeyed through the Hogwarts wards to Privet drive.

He arrived soon after and pressed on a small button on the inside of his robes, calling all available Order members to his location. An ingenious device he had thought of after looking through one of the

random books strewn around his office, this one focusing on connection charms. He had applied the protean charm to Order members specified buttons and given the idea to one Miss Granger for her D.A. galleons. A moment later, most of the members who had been at the meeting, including an out of breath Remus made it to Number 4. Motioning them to follow him, he shot a spell at the front door which blasted it full off its hinges, to reveal a shocked, but none the less battle ready Tonks who was in the middle of sitting Seraph down on a conjured cushion in the living room.

“Tonks, full report, now.” Demanded the grisly Ex-Auror upon taking in the scene.

“I don’t completely know. I got here and heard screaming and lights flashing in the house and decided to investigate. By the time I got there, Harry had already downed two Death Eaters -new recruits by the looks of them- and was losing to a dual with another, inner circle maybe. I started dueling with him and almost knocked him out when a fourth showed up from somewhere and pushed me back, but I was in front of Harry then and they couldn’t get to him. They left after that with the ones Harry knocked out. Harry won’t wake up though, I’ve tried.” Tonks finished. Dumbledore gave her a piercing stare for a moment, and Tonks looked apprehensive, trying her best to fend off the mental attack. It was almost too subtle to feel, but she did and fed him scattered false memories as soon as she could make them. Finally, Dumbles looked satisfied.

“Where are his relatives Nymphrodora? I know at least two of them are dead, but one was killed under unusual means.” Dumbledore asked.

“Well, his cousin Dudley is all over the kitchen, and his Aunt and Uncle are in the shower and bedroom respectively.” Tonks said in an emotionless tone. After what Harry’s cousin had done, she had nothing against Harry except that it could have been cleaner. Moody went to the kitchen and a couple others went to check out the others. Mad-eye came back a minute later, with an almost imperceptible grin on his face.

“Very eloquent way of putting that Tonks. All over the kitchen indeed! Albus, that boy looked to have been set on fire then blasted to high hell. ‘Don’t know what he did to piss ‘im off like that though.’ He thought to himself, his electric blue eye stuck to the side of his head looking at Harry, more specifically his forearms that held concealed wand holsters that were even hazy to his eye. Holsters that even he would be hard pressed to come by.

“Have you ever seen someone do that before Alastor? I have seen Death Eaters do many a gruesome thing, but I am not sure I have even seen what you describe done.” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes, I have.” Was all he would say, obviously not wanting to talk about it.

“When have you seen it? And why did they do it?” Dumbles pressed.

“It is generally an act of Retribution. Perhaps the boy pissed someone off mightily.” Was all he would say before walking out of the door and apparating away.

“Sir,” One of the Order members who had gone to check out the rest of the Dursley’s interrupted.

“Sir, like you said, they’re dead. Looks like they were put under the Cruciatus curse until they died. Blood has just now stopped pouring out of their ears.” The man reported, making Dumbledore sigh.

“Well then Nymphrodora, I suppose it was a good thing that you left early tonight.” Dumbledore said, ignoring Tonks’ look from hearing her given name.

“Almost as soon as I was alerted that the wards had somehow fallen, I received your call. The wards could not have come down unless Harry left sometime today, which I know that he would not after having been explicitly told not to, or one or more of the Dursley’s was put under the Imperious and allowed the Death Eaters inside the house, thus breaking the wards. And since they were not attacking the wards; they did not need a large team, very clever Tom, very clever. Remus, I want Harry taken back to Headquarters and have

Madame Pomfrey look over him.” Dumbles told him, handing him a newly made portkey out of a bent and broken tea tray, which activated as soon as Remus touched it, taking him and Seraph to Sirius’ bedroom at Grimmauld Place.

“Kingsley, make sure nobody saw anything, and Obliviate any who did.” Dumbledore ordered.

“Professor, I have Harry’s things, but I can’t find his wand, or his owl.” Molly Weasley said, looking slightly distraught, whether by the lack of bird, wand or by the death that surrounded her Dumbledore could not tell.

“Thank you Molly, I was just about to ask you to gather his things. Hedwig may have finally been forced out by the wards, and has not tried to come back yet. She will most likely turn up sometime. As for his wand, that is truly sad. I fear that the death eaters may have taken it with them. He will need to be outfitted before school starts again. I want everyone out as soon as possible. Incinerate the house, it will take down any remnants of the wards, and I don’t want Voldemort learning anything about them if we happen to use something similar in the future.”

“But sir, what about the Dur-” But Tonks was cut off, as Dumbledore had just popped out of existence before she could finish her sentence. Around her Order members were setting off incendiary spells before they apparated out of the house, Harry’s stuff being taken care of already. ‘They must have been right bastards for Hedwig to do that to them, oh well.’ Tonks thought as she apparated away to HQ.

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“What can you tell us Poppy?” Albus Dumbledore asked from his seat in the corner of the room. As soon as Remus had arrived with Seraph, he had sat him in the bed and fire-called Madame Pomfrey. Seraph now laid in Sirius’ old bedroom in a large four poster bed. Remus, Tonks, and a few Weasley’s plus Hermione sat around the bed, waiting to know about Seraph’s condition. Everyone else had been

kicked out of the room by the nurse, and it was a matter of time before she made it to the rest of them.

“Not much Albus. He doesn’t seem to be physically harmed, just magically drained. You said that there had been an attack?” She asked.

“Yes. I believe that Death Eaters were able to infiltrate the house to try to capture Mr. Potter, killing his relatives in the process.” Dumbledore told her.

“Well, given the amount of time I spend mending him up, I know his body and magic like the back of my hand. He is magically exhausted to an extreme degree. So much so that it may have changed his core to an extent. It is rare, but it does happen. A wizard or witch will deplete their core to the point that there is nearly nothing left. If that happens, it will feed on the ambient magic surrounding them, if there is any. It is truly a dangerous time for the individual, and their core. If they were to be hit with a spell, it is possible that even if it was a medical spell, it could kill them, or possibly be absorbed and assimilated into their magic, causing unpredictable and potentially adverse effects. That is why I can’t tell you anymore than the fact that he is magically exhausted, as the scan is not deep and doesn’t effect his body or magic. Mr. Potter is a very powerful young man, magically speaking. His core being larger than some his age, will take longer to regenerate the lost magic. Anywhere from a few weeks to months. But, if I know anything about this young man, he’ll be up and about - against my orders, mind you- within the next week or two.” Poppy told the surrounding vigil.

“Thank you Poppy. I leave you to your charge now.” Dumbledore said, before walking out of the room.

“Now the rest of you lot, out! He needs rest, and it will be over my dead body that he doesn’t receive it. Go on.” She told them, shooing them out of the room. Hermione left, as well as some Weasley’s, Molly being last, looking livid at being told to leave, the same image being seen on her daughter while Ron had taken Hermione by the hand to have some ‘alone time’. Tonks and Remus were just about to leave before the nurse stopped them.



“Not you two.” She said, fixing them with a hard stare.

“Uhm... What can we do for you Madame Pomfrey?” Asked Tonks, being as clumsy as she was, even if it was an act some times, she remembered the overbearing nurse from her Hogwarts years. That tone and look never boded well for her. She was not quite sure why they were being stopped, but hoped that she did not know anything more then what everyone else was told.

“You, Remus can tell me is this is truly Mr. Potter.” She asked, before throwing a locking charm at the door. Tonks’ stomach dropped and she nearly squeaked.

“Of course he is. Why would you think differently?” Remus asked, his voice even, trying not to sound suspicious.

“I ask, Remus, because of your affliction, you would be able to tell the difference between him and an imposter. The only magic that he has right now is being used to maintain a metamorphic image of Harry Potter.” She finished.

“I can truly say that I have know idea what you are talking about, but I do know that this is Harry. He smells a little different, more like his father perhaps. I’ll have to ask him about that actually...” Remus trailed off.

“Madame Pomfrey, how do you know that he is under a metamorphic disguise?” Tonks asked, wondering once again what the hell was going on and how Harry suddenly gained a very rare talent. Keeping up a metamorphic change was hard enough, you had to concentrate on keeping up the image, even if it was at the back of your mind. But she had never heard of a change lasting after unconsciousness.

“It’s his eyes that give it away. Look closely, you can almost see the subtle pulse of magic running through them, trying to return to the way they were before. The scan also said something about a body anomaly. He must have found out about this gift recently and used it under necessity, though for as little magic as he has right now, he should not be able to maintain any change. The problem lies not with

his ability, but with the fact that Harry Potter does not resemble Harry Potter, which is disturbing as he did not look any differently at the end of the year when I checked him. There is also a mark that shows through, besides the scar.” She told them, as she pulled open Seraph’s sleeping shirt that the nurse had outfitted him with. In the middle of his chest was a smallish ball of white that looked to have an almost feather-like pattern to them, surrounded by black flames.

“I said earlier that magic can be absorbed by those who have suffered an extreme magical drain, and that spells may have adverse effects on their cores if absorbed. His core has been altered by a massive influx of foreign magic. It may have had some...effects on his magic, or his abilities. I am not sure of the extent. Judging by the fire around the mark, I’d say at the least he may gain an affinity towards fire magic, or fire in general.” Madame Pomfrey said.

“Hedwig...” Remus said under his breath as he gazed at the tattoo like mark on Seraph’s chest. He had said it softly, but Poppy Pomfrey still heard it.

“What was that Remus?” She asked sharply. Remus sighed, and looked to Tonks for a moment before continuing.

“If it is something that deals with Harry’s health, it falls under confidentiality oaths, correct?” Remus asked and she nodded.

“His owl, Hedwig. I believe that she was killed earlier today. I believe that Harry killed his cousin out of vengeance and that Hedwig’s spirit killed the remaining Dursleys.” Remus told her.

“Well, that was both vague and enlightening Mr. Lupin. If what you say is true, then there was no Death Eater attack, and Mr. Potter killed his cousin after said cousin killed his owl, Hedwig. Correct so far? Right, then the spirit of his familiar killed his remaining family with something that resembles the aftermath of prolonged Cruciatus exposure?” She asked evenly, not at all sarcastic, though one could see it that way.

“In a nut shell... yes.” Remus answered. She stared at him for a full minute.

“Well, that makes more sense than what was reported actually. In his aggrieved state he may have actually absorbed his familiar’s soul in trying to hold on to a piece of her. That would explain the changes to his core while he did not actually absorb any magic to replace what he had lost, besides what small bit of residual magic he may have gotten by traveling via portkey. Really, the man should know the signs of magical exhaustion, as well as the hazards! It doesn’t seem to have hurt him any though. I am not sure that I have never actually found or even heard of a case quite like this before. We will have to confirm this with Mr. Potter when he wakes up, of course. Seems I owe Alastor five galleons.” She finished, sounding slightly annoyed.

Remus was quiet, contemplating what the nurse had surmised, and wondering how any of this happened. He had his suspicions of course, and those usually turned out close to the truth, if not spot on. ‘It seems Harry has a lot of explaining to do once he wakes up.’ Remus thought with a small, rueful smile on his lips.

“Why would you owe him five galleons?” Tonks asked, wondering why she had mentioned it at all.

“Well, I talked to him before you fire-called, Remus. Seems he thought that your story about the attack did not add up to him, something about ‘Bloody concealed wands’ and ‘Rites of retribution’. I told him that he was being paranoid again, went so far as to bet him five galleons that he was off the mark. But if what you say is true, then he did kill his cousin out of retribution. He also has two concealed wand holsters, one on each arm that I can not take off. I hate it when he is right. You will have to have a discussion with him as well, I think.”

“I trust you won’t say anything of this to anybody else, Madame Pomfrey?” Remus asked as he sat back down next to Seraph’s bed.

“I won’t. One, it falls under the oaths, and I wouldn’t divulge information of that sort for Hippocrates himself, not without explicit permission from Mr. Potter. And two, I don’t trust what Albus might do to him should he find out about this. He sometimes speaks of him as if he is the final weapon to the war, to be kept locked up until its time

for release. And year after year I think that I may not be far from my score. It is my job to ensure the health of my patients. Albus may forget, with all the company he keeps, that there are still Slytherin ears around him in his group of Phoenixes.” She said, smirking at their shocked faces. Using this to her advantage, she pushed them out the door to allow her charge a better atmosphere to rest in. It wouldn’t be another week and a half before Seraph physically got out of that bed again. But as Seraph slept on, the world continued to spin, and his mind and magic were never at rest.

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It was later that evening that Professor Dumbledore called an emergency meeting of the Order of the Phoenix together to go over the attack at Privet Drive.

"I call this meeting of the Order of the Phoenix to attention. As many of you know, Mr. Potter was attacked in his home today. And with today's attack, a few things have been cleared up, while other disturbing questions have been raised. With the Harry's relatives dead, the blood protection is now gone. That was our greatest means of protection for him, wasted by Voldemort." He said sadly, ignoring the winces the surrounding members made.

“Severus, do you know of any attacks that were scheduled?”  
Dumbledore asked.

“As I said a before, earlier today actually, the Dark Lord has not been seen and has not given any specific orders to anybody. There are always those however who may wish to garner favor with him, and go out on their own to stir something up. After a failure such as they had, whoever was involved would most likely be extremely tight-lipped about the whole affair, or risk the Dark Lord’s displeasure once he finds out.” Snape finished.

“But they have his wand. Even with their failure at capturing Harry, wouldn’t that be sufficient a prize to get out of punishment?” One of the newer members asked.

“This was not some failed raid. They attempted to kidnap Potter, and failed. The Dark Lord takes Potter very seriously, perhaps more than he should. He himself makes any plans to capture Potter, and usually has a hand in the direct execution. If they had succeeded, he would have killed them for managing to do what he had tried for years. As it is, they failed, and I myself shudder to think of the tortures he would unleash upon them. No, if they were smart enough to figure a way into the boy’s house, I would assume that they are smart enough to never return to his call or kill themselves to escape the pain of the mark. I do not keep track of any of the new recruits unless they come from Hogwarts, nor do I look over many of the older Death Eaters as I am either at an inner meeting or brewing, so I doubt that I will be able to find out who is missing without asking awkward questions.” The greasy man finished, leaving everyone a little grim faced.

“Thank you Severus. Tell us if you hear anything at the next meeting. Now the next item of discussion deals with where Harry will be staying for the rest of the summer. With as many people are in and out of this house, it is hardly a place for reflection and grievance. Not to mention the décor is absolutely dreadful.” Dumbledore smiled as he said this, he himself wearing a nearly neon blue robe that had house elves running around cooking, cleaning, and one pair doing disturbing acts behind his collar that was just visible if he turned the right way. He kept the house looking the way it was to remind his subordinates of what they were fighting. And to keep those annoying brats he had persuaded to spy on Harry for him busy during the summer. A good deal, all things considered.

‘It was instrumental for Harry to stay isolated at his relatives’ house. With no one to talk to during the summer and no information about the Wizarding world, he would do as he did before, blow up at everyone, keeping them away from him and to further close up and isolate himself from the rest of the world. Then I, the benevolent-grandfather personified, would come and take him away from his prison. And though he may have been angry at me towards the end of the year, which will most likely have been abated enough by that time for him to listen to my guidance. Of course, throwing hints of regular private tutoring from some Order members, maybe a training session or two with me, sparingly of course, and he would accept and do anything I tell him. This would keep him busy and away from

anyone else at Hogwarts, besides his two best 'friends', which are already taken care of. He would soon forget his anger at me, and he will see me as his saving grace and mentor again. A simple and perfect plan. Down the proverbial shitter. There are few who can adequately look after him the way that needs to be done, and fewer still that are well protected. Severus would be perfect to look after him. Well protected, no body besides Severus and myself can even enter. Though, I fear that he would kill the boy before the end of summer... perhaps I have given him too much leeway over his house and conduct... doesn't matter now, I suppose.' Dumbledore thought, as he contemplated places to stick the boy.

"We will keep good care of him, Albus. The poor boy is dreadfully thin, and with Ronald and Hermione here, and the rest of the boys out of the house, there will be more food. And it will make Ginny very happy to have him to herself over the summer. She is still up in her room, distraught over what happened earlier. I can keep a good eye out on him, seeing as I am home for all of the day. And I can have Ginny give me reports of his behavior daily." Mrs. Weasley said, as if this was the best plan of action and her mind was made up.

"I am sorry, Molly. I simply can not allow Harry to stay at the Burrow for the summer. It is just not well protected." Not to mention that at the Burrow, he would have distractions and be able to have access to the news and such. With a curse-breaker as a son you would think that they could have adequate wards put up. I'll mention that to Arthur at some point, I think some Order funds can be made available for that use.

"I don't to see why he cannot stay here, Professor. It will most likely be his house after the will is read, his or Remus' anyway. If you replace some doorknobs and put on some paint, this place won't look so depressing. And it helps to move on if you have someone to talk to. And even if he chooses not to, the fact that he can should be some comfort to him." Tonks said, looking a little embarrassed at having spoken in front of nearly the whole Order, and against the Head of said Order.

“As I said before, Nymphrodora. This is not a good atmosphere for recovery or grieving. Does any one have any suggestions?” Dumbledore asked, cutting off whatever Tonks was going to say next.

“What about at Hogwarts?” Someone put forward.

‘Hogwarts?’ Dumbledore thought. ‘Yes. Well protected, few people there during the summer. Though he would have access to the owls, I can put confundus charms over the entrance, making him drop his letter and forgetting why he was there... And I can give him one of the Staff apartments and confine him there. Why, I could lock him in there and make him believe that he is at a secure non specified location and that he is only safe while he is inside. Yes... that should work.’

“No, not Hogwarts. I believe that the wards are weaker when there are less children in the summer months, (‘more like my observation wards are weaker when there are less children about’) and it will be quite hard to keep an eye on him. But I do have the perfect location in mind. It is about the size of a large flat and well taken care of. I cannot reveal the location though, due to the wards and such. But rest assured, there is no better place for him.” He finished, giving a reassuring glance at Mrs. Weasley, and marveling at how easy it was to get everything back on track. Though he had met some resistance from young Nymphrodora, and he could see Remus crushing a spoon into a little ball while trying to burn a whole into the table, no one else had thought that his plan was anything but perfect.

“As soon as Mr. Potter regains consciousness, I will take him to his new residence. I believe that is all. This meeting is adjourned.” And with that Order members returned to wherever they had come from before the meeting.

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He sat upon a terrible throne of silver and bones, set high upon steps that allowed the man who sat upon it to peer over his followers easily, and made sure they knew their place. Always below him. The room was large and shaped like a curved triangle, allowing the overseer to

be seen at all times, and to see his supporters from many angles. The man, or thing as the case may be, was of course Voldemort. The self entitled 'Dark Lord', bastard heir of Slytherin. He had no right to the title, and he knew it. Apparently he was bound in his blood to not steal from a Black, which he had attempted to, and lost the title and money that went with it, but he still used the title liberally. It was his inability to access his vault that he relied on his followers to supply him with funds. Once he took over Gringotts, he would have all the funds he would ever need though. But that was a move so far off that it was hardly worth thinking about at present.

He was still weak from his attempted possession of the Potter brat, but none of his followers knew that. It was amazing really, the will the boy had. If he could but turn him into an ally, what wondrous chaos they could cause! That could wait, however. He still needed to regenerate the rest of the magic he had lost, and to try and regain some of the abilities that had vanished when losing his body. It had taken him more than a week and a half in a deep meditative state to regain enough of his magic to be able to produce a Cruciatus curse capable of destroying a mind in a respectable amount of time. He knew, he had been practicing on some of the house-elves. In his line of work, that was too long to be out of command.

"Lucius, bring forth your remuneration." The order was hissed softly, but heard by all none the less. Lucius Malfoy brought out a bag of coins from within his robes and placed them at the feet of his Master, before kissing the hem of his robes and backing up a few paces on his knees, head bowed low enough for the Dark Lord to not see the fear in his eyes. Voldemort summoned the bag with a wave of his hand, and weighed it with one hand and then the other, making a show of it.

"My dear Lucius. I am afraid that you have not given me enough. Why, pray tell, is it that you short change me? Do you believe me stupid? Do you believe I am ignorant?" Voldemort asked the question in a deadly whisper.

"N-no. My Lord. I am terribly sorry for this wrong I have done to you. There is a new Head of Black, and he has disowned my pilfering and traitorous wife from what the Goblins of Gringotts can tell me. Her



stipend made up half of my dues, and I have been unable to make up the rest on such short notice. I will bring what is missing in addition to what I owe you at our next meeting, my Lord.” Lucius said softly, a pleading tone was evident in his voice.

“You dare set terms, Lucius? I do not care if Gringotts had seized all of you assets! You will bring me your tithe, and on time! Cricio!” He shouted as he stood up. The crackling beam hit him in the chest and he fell face forward onto the cold stone floor, writhing and screaming in agony for a few minutes, long enough for him to lose control over his bodily functions and shat himself in front of nearly every Death Eater at Voldemort’s command. The Dark Lord, feeling renewed after his small bout of torture sat back in his seat.

“You say that your wife was disowned. If the Head dared to do that to your wife, he may have also disowned Bellatrix. Where is she, Lucius?” The question once again a cruelly soft tone that held the threat of pain under it.

“I do not know, my Lord. I have not seen her recently, nor do I believe that she is here at this meeting.” Lucius said.

“Crats!” The Dark Lord shouted. He was immediately rewarded with a near silent pop, and a shaking house elf who was missing an arm and had a ridiculous amount of scars kneeling to the point where his long tube like nose started to crack from the pressure of his bow in front of him.

“Y-y-yes-s-s, M-master Dark Lord-d sir. W-what can I-lowl-y Crats do-does for yous?” The trembling elf asked.

“Bring forth Bellatrix immediately!” was the command. The elf popped away as fast as he could, leaving an unusually loud crack in his departure. Various members came up to his throne to kiss his robes and give him their offerings, receiving praise scarcely and pain copiously, until the house elf came back looking nearly translucent, an incredible feat given their skin tone.

“M-m-mast-ter D-d-d-dark Lor-d-d s-sir.” The elf began, almost unable to keep itself from shaking long enough to get a syllable out.

“Where is she you disgusting maggot! I told you to bring her here, now! Talk you abomination of magic!”

“D-d-d-ea-ad-d” It managed to spit out after a few seconds.

“What! Telum Flatus!” Voldemort screamed in rage as several hundred small silvery darts shot from his wand and lodged into the offending elf, before each dart exploded with enough force to blast a small hole into a wall. The elf was obliterated down to the threads of his pillow case, grayish red blood made a two meter circle around where the blast had taken place.

“You, go and find her. Do not return with ill news.” Was all that was said to a new recruit who had yet to take his mark. The boy returned a few minutes later, looking not unlike the house elf that had gone before him. He prostrated himself before his Lord, before giving him his news.

“It is true, my lord. She lays in her bath of bloody water dead. She took her own life, but did not leave a reason, my Lord.” The new recruit finished. Though he looked ready to pass out in fear, his voice did not waver. While at any other time this may have slightly impressed the Dark Lord, this was not such a time. His chosen was dead. He was going to give her the honor of bearing his child, his heir. If he could even sire a child at this point. After dying, being reborn, and his lengths to achieve immortality, he was not sure if it was possible, but she was to be the one. No, now was no time to be impressed.

“Tergum Crusta” was shouted and a nondescript light shot out of the end of the Dark Lord’s wand, impacting the Death Eater squarely on his forehead. The skin around where the spell hit started to turn pinkish, then grey, before it began to crack, forming red lines in the newly grayed skin. The patches of grey skin in between the red lines flaked off in large pieces, leaving the blood, bone, and muscle below the skin open to the elements. On Voldemort’s orders he was disrobed so that he and his minions might see the full effect. After a minute the sad follower had no outer skin left and was starting to lose his voice, having hit close to every octave within the human ability to

do so. As a 'mercy', he was hit with a suspension charm, which kept him upright and from losing too much blood and other critical parts which prolonged his life for the Dark Lord's enjoyment. His muscles then became cracked with the same lines that had covered his skin before. Muscle tissue began falling off of him in small pieces, shriveling up before they hit the ground. Without muscles to protect his insides, his intestines fell out, only being held by the suspension spell which still had him standing upright.

"Do not disappoint me again, Lucius. Or this will be a mercy compared to what you shall receive."

"Off course, my Lord. It will not happen again." Lucius said as he backed away, making sure not to run into the pathetic living skeleton of a man behind him or the pile elf blood.

The tortured man was hit with bone breaking hexes every where except his head, back, and chest until the suspension charm wore off a few minutes later and he died from blood loss and trauma. He was left there for the rest of the meeting as an example for all who could see. It was not often that he utterly destroyed a potentially useful crony, but he felt that his mood warranted it. A few new attacks were discussed, none mentioning any attack on the Potter brat, though. That is, until Severus Snape spoke up. He would tell his Lord what he had learned from Dumbledore and his precious Order. He had no true loyalties, and given the opportunity, he would kill either of them to rid himself of one more master. It was at the end of the meeting, when most, if not all of his followers had left, leaving only the inner circle members still there that Snape spoke up.

"My Lord." Snape said, kneeling before his Lord, but his head was held to meet just below the Dark Lord's eyes. Any higher and he was risking an attack to his mind and showing disrespect by gazing into the crimson orbs without permission. And permission was only granted if a mind attack was coming.

"Yes, Severus, my pet?" Voldemort asked lazily, looking for any excuse to hex the man before him, like he would any of his followers.

"The Potter brat, he has been moved from his relatives house following a failed attack." Snape said softly.

"Explain." The serpentine quality of his voice could not be denied and it sent shivers down Snape's spine.

"A few days ago, shortly after a meeting of Dumbledore's 'Order', his assigned guard arrived to find what she tells as four Death Eaters, two new recruits and two more senior, attacking the boy in his home. She says that Potter had downed the two younger before she arrived and was losing to another when she began dueling with him, almost besting him until the last arrived. The last -whom had tortured his relatives to death under the Cruciatus, and most likely had killed his cousin, who had been painted across the kitchen, I am told- surprised her from behind and pushed her into the boy, which she protected enough for them to give up shortly there after. I believe that they knew they were under a time constraint once the wards were down and had to leave, taking the downed with them. Dumbledore and his lackeys arrived shortly there after. Potter is in a magically induced coma due to extreme magical exhaustion and will not wake up for a few weeks at this rate. The only other information I have is that his wand has been taken by those who attacked him. It could not be found in the house, so Potter is now without the ability to do magic. He will be taken to be fitted for a new wand at some point after he awakes. And though it is of no significance, his owl is missing. According to Dumbledore, there were owl rejection wards over the property, though the bird managed to get inside. I believe it is dead and is painted in the kitchen with his relative." Snape finished with a small sneer.

"How was it that they got past the wards?" Riddle asked, general curiosity in his voice, a rare thing.

"It is believed by Dumbledore that they put Potter's relatives under the Imperious curse and made them allow entrance."

"With all of the wards on the boy's house, did the great Albus Dumbledore did not think to include a dark magic detection ward?" Voldemort asked incredulously.

“He had before, my Lord. But they were taken off when he began having his dreams induced by you. They continuously set off the wards, and so they were removed. I was only made aware of this after bring up the question to Dumbledore in private myself.” Snape told him.

“Simple, yet ingenious. They were able to kill his relatives, ensuring that he could not be held under Dumbledore’s ‘Blood Protection Wards’ again. His wand was taken, and now he has no way of defending himself. I would let them live, had they not failed. Lucius, Mortimer, Avery. Find out who is responsible, Now!” He ordered. Once they had left, he turned once again to Snape.

“With the boy in a coma, will you be able to get close enough to Potter to kill or poison him?” Voldemort asked.

“No, my Lord. Unfortunately the nurse has never trusted me, nor my potions and performs detection spells on them which will show if they are poisoned in a way to make him ill. There are poisons that hide their purpose to a healer’s spell, but they do not have any practical purpose for us. The potions include things like Dysentery, which would be seen as a mild irritation that is easily fixed by the nurse and wont kill him.” The Dark Lord nodded, but not satisfied.

“Where is he being taken?”

“I do not know, and Dumbledore will tell no one. He says it is do to the wards, which if it is true, would indicate something like the Fidelious or an un-plottable ward. He could be taking him to his private home or a number of unknown places.”

“And are you positive that they were Death Eaters, Severus?” Voldemort asked.

“Though they may have looked like Death Eaters, it is possible that they may have been supporters who wished to gain favor before coming to place their loyalty with you. No mark was left at the scene. This may suggest that they were not marked supporters or they did not have enough time.” Snape said, still kneeling.



his thoughts and brought him to full attention. Seraph looked at the man for nearly a minute, contemplating not answering, before realizing he was in no position to escape and he was nearly surrounded by able looking wizards.

"I am Seraph Orion Black. Familial nomenae 'Black Angel of Orion'. Head of Black Family; Nemo me impune lacessit." Seraph growled the last in Grimtongue. Many of the attendants looked shocked at his name, title, or what Seraph assumed, his use of man to the right of the man who spoke just grinned, a lopsided and feral grin. And Seraph knew that he was related to this man.

"Another Grim speaker. I was beginning to think that another would not come. It has been long." Grinning man said.

"Welcome, heir of Black. Though your early arrival is unprecedented, you are welcomed all the same. I am known as Knox. Besides me is my son, Meissa, the first Black. We preside over every Right of Choice for our Heir's and for the Heir's of the descendants of the Guild for their right of choice. You, young Seraph, see before you a rare event, even for this line. For the other lines, it is not uncommon to have one or two ancestors summoned to preside with us. In our line, it is just us and perhaps an ancestor from the mother's line to help with the proceedings, depending on their power and standing. There are times though when 'others' will be summoned. These 'others' are the last ancestors of lines that were held within the Grim's Guild. When one of the blood-bound lines dies out, the Black line takes over and it is added to our line. Do you understand so far?" Knox asked. Seraph nodded.

"The ritual that created Meissa tied every members magic to him. He gained all of their abilities, to an extent. Over his long life, when an unfortunate member would die without leaving a recognized Heir, he gained whatever ability he had from that line in full, instead of having a partial ability."

"So who are the rest of these people?" Seraph asked, looking at people who were at both sides of the two men, stopping at a man decked out in Slytherin colors with it's crest upon his robes.

“They are those whom you descend from, and those who’s lines have ended, passing them onto you. One had an Heir, but he has disowned his blood, and passed his line to you. They will introduce themselves and tell you what they will after you have chosen your path.”

“So, Lord Black, Heir of Meissa, Ever Heir of the Grim’s Guild, Heir of yet unmentioned lines that you see before you. You have a choice ahead of you. To walk the path of light, or darkness, or that rarely trodden path of twilight, your gifts and magic will reflect your choice. Light magic is the magic of life. Of creation. It heals and it builds. You can embrace this, take hold of it and create life where was their death before. You can remain in the light and hope that it will be strong enough to protect you. But I see in your soul darkness. You may embrace darkness, take it as your own. Bend it to your will. Bring forth the change needed to your stagnant world. Kill and destroy, revel in your chaos. Make others serve you, power to do what ever you want. Make your choice...” The force of the voice reverberated across the sky, and shook the ground.

Seraph thought for a moment. It was true that could never be purely of the light again. He had embraced something dark. What was ‘light’ anyway. Dumbledore is said to be the greatest ‘light’ wizard that there was in recent times, but he is a manipulative chess master. But the dark path that Meissa described sounded like something that would appeal more to Riddle then himself, except perhaps changing the world part. He would do as he had wanted since his father had told him about the choice he would have to make.

“I choose neither the light, nor the darkness. My destiny may have been set to destroy the one of true darkness, but I will do it on my own terms. I was born into the light and marked by darkness. I will forge my own path through the twilight. Walk the path between them, and I will use them as I see fit.” Seraph declared, his voice sounding unearthly, bouncing around the clearing.

“Your choice has been declared to sun and moon, earth and sky, stars and magic. Fate has set your path, but it is guided by your will. By choice, by right, and by magic, so it is spoken, so mote it be...” Meissa finished as wind swirled around the clearing, the stars



brightened unbelievably, and Seraph's aura exploded outwards, a swirl of pitch black and stunning silver.

"Your path is set, your choice given. And though you have not yet reached the eve of your 16th, you will be blessed by your ancestors. Look towards them, and embrace their gifts." Knox finished, nodding towards them. Seraph looked once again towards the thin man in green and silver.

"Do not look at me child, it pains me to leave my legacy to one such as your self, a Black or not. Though you would have gained it if you had succeeded in killing the bastard heir of my blood, it could have waited till then. If it was not for those blasted blood laws I would not be here!" The thin man hissed in parseltongue.

"And if your Heir was not so incompetent, I would not be here and it would not matter." Seraph hissed back.

"A Grimtongue who speaks the snake language as well," Meissa hissed. "The plot thickenss..."

"You speak my tongue, but are not of my line. Ah, I see from your mind. You are correct, my Heir was incompetent. Not able to kill an infant, and to attempt is most shameful. Perhaps you are the better choice..." The man -presumably Slytherin- drawled out in his hiss. Knox cleared his throat, and continued.

"I, am Lord Salazar Eltanin Slytherin, Master of Serpents, Descendant of the Lesser Master of the Grim's Guild, and a Founder of Hogwarts. My Heir has lost his title by breaking a sacred blood law. I am without Heir, though the one know as Thomas Riddle is still alive. Therefore I pass to you the full ability of parseltongue, Parsel Magic. Riddle may be disowned, but I cannot recall his magic back, so he also has this magic. There are few offensive uses for this magic, but they are devastating. The defensives uses are extremely strong but are specific in their uses. The magic is mainly used in detection spells, animation and some mind magic, things I found particular use for. Use the gift well." A silver and neon green glowing mist surrounded Seraph for a moment, before it was absorbed into his body and he

felt control over his use of parseltongue and the slippery magic that was Parsel Magic. Slytherin gave him a nod before disappearing.

The next man was shorter than Slytherin, but better built. Messy golden hair was atop his head, wearing red and gold and the Gryffindor crest sat on his chest.

"I, Lord Black, am Sir Godric Gryffin of Dor, Master Swordsman and Fighter, Master Warder, Master of Transfiguration, Creator of the branch of Transfiguration known as Animagus, Founder of Hogwarts, and Sire of the Line of Potter. You already carry my magic, but I bestow upon you the gift of Full Animagus. It will allow you to connect to your animagus form, gaining its abilities. It becomes part of you, and you become part of it. Do not let the knowledge of Potter wards fall into disuse. Rarely is there seen a grey magic user who holds the Potter line, but I can tell you will make us proud." Godric winked at him before disappearing like Slytherin had. This time he was surrounded by red and gold mist before it was sucked into his skin, feeling something in the back of his mind stir, shake, and settle again.

And so it went on for a while more. The last of Ross giving him their affinity towards potions and rituals, which would give him the ability to create potions on instinct if there was none for what he wanted and less likely to kill himself during a ritual. The last of the Macualay's giving him greater connection of mind to magic, making sure he would have a boost when he began to study the mind magics. The last of Linksys' gave him the ability of language, a most useful thing to have for runes, and any other non magical language, according to the man. The line of Creo gave him the ability of mechanics, allowing him to create things easier, 'Amazing things can be done with the right tools' she had said. Finally, only Meissa and Knox were left in front of him.

"You have been given great gifts, young Seraph, and though it has been repeated by all of your ancestors, you must use them well. For myself, I give you the ability of Martial. It allows you to fight better, should you need it. You will need to train it though, otherwise it may go dormant. You will find that you are a natural user of weapons also." Knox said before he disappeared with a light smile.

"If you had not realized it before, Seraph, you are my chosen Heir. Touched by the serpent indeed... I will give you no power from this realm. I have left to you the entirety of my life's work within your vault, which only you can enter, but you already know that. Knowledge is a wondrous and powerful thing Seraph, and I have left to you all that I knew. There are techniques in the books to help you learn, I suggest you use those. I also left my portrait in my personal trunk. I can speak more to you there, for we have little time left. There is one more, who wishes to give something to you though." Meissa said, his voice sounding oddly gruff and serpentine. Like he was not used to speaking outside of using Grimtongue or parseltongue.

"I will, thank you. I will not disappoint you. Who is still here?" Seraph asked, seeing nobody left. In a burst of dark flames, Hedwig appeared before him and landed on his shoulder.

"She has actually already given it to you. Though an owl she may have been, she held the soul of a Phoenix within her. Had she lived and died naturally, she would have been reborn a Phoenix. As it is, she was killed, turning her soul to that of a Dark Phoenix. Rather than move on, her loyalty was such that she gave you what she could to help you on your path. She has touched your soul, and your core. She has given you the affinity of fire. Fire is a dangerous and beautiful thing, warm and docile, raging and powerful. I cannot tell you anymore. You will have to check your core once you learn how to and use the Black Stone of ability to see if anything else has changed within your magic. You have been in a magically induced coma for the past week or more, regaining your magic back, but with your gifts filling your core also. You are being held in one of the ancestral homes. Be cautious of the White one, and fear not from the pink or furry one they are allies. The nurse and the eye suspect, tell them no lies. You have less and more on your side than you know. Fare thee well, Heir of Black. May you always walk the everlasting twilight." The first Black faded out, as did Hedwig after one last affectionate bite of Seraph's ear.

Ooo  
ooO

I think I'll end it there. It took me forever to get this down. Hope you all enjoyed it. More to come.

Review, and tell me what you think. Anonymous reviews are accepted.

To the reviewers:

UldAses/ Heather/ AzureSky123/ schmanski/feartheturtle35 /mauripendragon/ solar1/Maben00/ AlphaPhi/ Blue Werewolf Boy/ jbfritz/Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ray and Matt are so all mine/ HarrygoestoHollywood/ Shadowed Rains/ gaul1/ Salena Snape/bandgsecurtiyaw/fanficfreak35/CirceVisigoth/Kaveman/gaul1/j bfritz/shadowwalker2/superb/Matt101/ThrainTalonwater/hilarydilarydo c/AzureSky123/Voldemortsunderstudy/Zaxxon/alen/bandgsecurtiyaw/ RexMeino/SalenaSnape/DarkWolfYingFa/Zevrillion/imgonnadie/snow fox2000/richard a lake/Kazua/firelordeg/OdinMage ApocSM Phntm-Phnx yuiop jabarber69 Kyrissean Angelis Kai Hiei Sasuke Bankotsu Ra... Lady FoxFire prutser bandgsecurtiyaw darkgryffin MatTer79 dumblefck76 Never Odd Or even highbrass Heart Mind Soul Digi Bonds imgonnadie Zevrillion Silat'r fallenAngel2389 Mcshnee the Triscuit Oxygen Kiss Schwinpt rlmess souls Shyposter Just Me Prime Xyverz Fear-of-Real-Life slashslut zafaran Queen of the Storms Helltanz98 Caddy94 WashedOut slayerstoryguy Maxennce icedragon925 MysterioX Ravenfur TheWiseSirlvanTheShadowLord Eowyn23 ApocSM Barby-Black Anime-Ronin satyr-oh Killer916 Ugly Duckling the dark icon writers Neurotic Cat Goddess bandgsecurtiyaw jbfritz CastusAlbusCor xyvortex Zevrillion gaul1 FairyQilan Maxennce Sky 05 coldfiredragon Shadowed Rains shadow of the black abyss japanesegirl102 PsychoSpiff Marikili68 TenshiZujin Just Me Prime Tree Flower Akira Stridder DragonFoxy Dirbatua Theboss996 wavefunction Shadow King77 Zero Legacy ariachan85 v v Queen Victoria Rkhiara IrishLass6 Syfes Queen of the Storms Alexandria Lily Potter sirius009 WebGuy Caliko zafaran Jensindenial3516 Junky Jensindenial3516 confusedcowuk Goyana HermioneGreen lone wolf blade .chik mrmistoffelees Andine BferBear Kara-sweet melody Obsidian-Dragon-Phoenix

violet7amethyst: Thanks for the review. Tell me what parts specifically you are talking about and I will go back and see if I cannot leave little reminders around there.

Chrisproffitt: Thanks, nice of you to say so.

riegert8: You said that, not me.

smartgy2008: Thanks.

zeldagirl1335: I'll try. 'flippin' sweet'. Interesting choice of expletive replacement.

Zafaran: Thanks. I hope this chapter met your expectations. I'll try to keep it up.

Salena Snape: Yeah, it will be interesting. Now I just have to figure it out. Glad that you liked the chapter.

Ianoda: Read your story, not bad. Looking forward to an update.

Xyverz: Thanks.

ChiSuiKaFuKu: I hope that the story looks better now. I'll have to be careful in the future as to how I compromise the story.

## Chapter 11: True Colours and Dummies

Brightness, a major contrast to the foggy night time he had woke up to before. Again there were voices, but they were hushed, quiet. Soft, encouraging voices. 'Sounds like Remus actually... Or it could be Tonks...'

"Mr. Potter, the scan says that your core has now almost fully regenerated. I have half a mind to tie you to the bed, just to make sure you stay in it. Scarcely even into the summer and I am patching you up again, though you are doing most of the work." 'Madame Pomfrey?' The land of nod swallowed him again.

"Harry, you need to wake up soon. You have a lot of explaining to do." 'Well, that can't be good... Definitely sounds like Remus.'

"I want to know that interesting curse you used on your cousin." That got his attention. Fast. He groaned and attempted to roll over until strong hands prevented it and he opened his eyes.

"Lo Remus, and how are you?" He asked groggily. He was in an unfamiliar bed, and by the window to the side of him, it was now night. The Hogwarts infirmary did not have beds like this, it was actually comfortable. The area was dark, but it gave the room a nearly cozy atmosphere.

"Not bad. Better now that you are awake though. We need to talk. Tonks is here too, she was with me when we found you. You can trust her." Remus said.

"Oh, I know that. 'Fear not the pink and furry one.' And what do you mean when you say you found me." Seraph asked. Ignoring the odd looks that Tonks was giving him. She did indeed have pink hair today.

"Tonks and I left halfway through an Order meeting last Saturday. A most peculiar thing happened. It seems that a new Head of Black was chosen. The new Head reclaimed Tonks, her mother, and her father through marriage to the Black family. This was not told to them through Gringotts however, they were told by blood and magic."

"It alerts family members to a change with the family, to those who are concerned anyway. I am not sure if anyone has active control over it, though you may be able to." Tonks cut in.

"So we wondered why a new Head would reclaim them. Or why there would be a new Head at all. Only a blood Heir can take over the Head of Family, and if Sirius did not have a son or daughter, he would have dissolved the family and liquidated his assets and give what was made from it to people in his will. But as far as we knew, Sirius never had any children. And once he was imprisoned, he never had the chance. This left us with few options as to who the new Head was, since he would not have left it to Draco, Bellatrix, or Narcissa. Then I remembered overhearing James mentioning something that had happened to him during an attack back in our seventh year to Sirius one day. I did not hear what the whole conversation was about but I gathered that it was possible for James to not be able to have children. Once you were born though, the thought never crossed my mind again, till just that moment. I assumed that if you were actually Sirius's son, he had his reasons for not telling you, or me, or anybody for that matter, and that you would have had to have left your home to go to Gringotts in order to claim what was yours. Dumbledore said during the Order meeting that if you were to leave the house within the first couple of weeks that the wards would fall, so Tonks and I left to come and bring you back here, to Grimmauld." Remus said while beginning to pace in front of the bed that Seraph was sitting on.

Seraph took all this in while watching Remus move back and forth. Remus had discerned all that from any of the possibilities that would have been presented to him. It made him wonder who else knew or could figure out who he was. He still was not sure about how he was going to handle the situation, but he could feel out the people around him and come to a decision. He did not plan to stay at what was now his ancestral home.

"Yeah, we found you in the kitchen, covered in blood, with your cousin plastered all over the place. Remus thinks he knows why it happened but I want to hear it from you." Tonks said, while getting up and forcing Remus to sit in a seat and stay there by sitting in his lap. Seraph just raised an eyebrow but didn't comment.

“Alright, well I came ‘home’ early from my trip to the Alley, it was getting late and I kept getting these bad feelings, anyway, I come home to find my Uncle pissed out of his mind and my cousin had set up a little surprise for me.” Seraph said his voice frigid. “He cut her wing off. He cut her fucking wing off. Came up behind me like a heard of buffalo and said ‘Nice, aint it?’ I should have killed him right there. His face, he was damn proud of himself too. Told me that he wasn’t done yet and punched me before throwing a lighter into a pan that was sitting on the table. Flames went up, and my stomach dropped. I went over to see why he did that to find Hedwig dying, being burned alive. I was shocked for a moment, the I told him ‘an eye for an eye’ and cut his arm off. Set his feet on fire, let him burn until he was nearly dead and threw a destruction curse at him.” Seraph gave a humorless grin that was all feral, but dropped it only a second later.

“I went to pick her up, you know? To hold her one last time. She turned to ash, and I lost it. I don’t really remember what happened after that, except for hearing phoenix song and seeing Hedwig’s spirit rushing into me.” Seraph said, glad that he had been able to say good bye to her after his choice.

“Well Remus, I guess you were right then. Hold on, so are you the Head of Black?” Tonks asked.

“Yeah. Seraph Orion Black, Head of the Noble and Most Ancient house of Black. Pleasure to meet you.” Seraph said with a grin, this time it contained at least some mirth. He did not expect Tonks go wide-eyed. She looked at him blankly for a moment before squeaking and suddenly going very meek, like a small child in front of a great elder. A meek Tonks looked ridiculous compared to her usual character, and Seraph had to suppress a laugh at the sudden personality change.

“Tonks, stop that. I would think that you would know that I don’t want you to think of me any differently, whether I am the head of the Family or not. I reclaimed your family because I know that you are good people. I also disowned Bellatrix and Narcissa which cuts Draco out of the family also.”

“So you are Sirius’s son. How?” Remus asked



"James was sterile; he could not have any children like you thought. My mum, brilliant witch that she was, created a ritual that would mix Sirius' blood and magic with James' magic, then somehow got mum pregnant with it. I think that she based the ritual off of an extremely ancient one that I heard about recently. Did my mum ever read any of the Black Family books somehow?" Seraph asked him.

"Yeah, I think she may have. Before Sirius left, he took a number of family books just to spite his parents. I think he kept them in the Potter home, that's where he ran to after leaving here. That is where she would have had access to them, why?"

"No reason, really. I just wanted to know if my hunch was correct. She was brilliant even think about using that ritual and then modifying it to work for her needs. Of course it was also possible that it could have killed her or me..." He said the last part to himself. Remus gave him an odd look but chose not to ask about 'rituals', he could find out later.

"So you are a Black, but you have the Potter magic? Does that suggest that you are the Black and Potter Heir?" He asked.

'Oh, I am Heir to a lot more then that, but that's beside the point' he thought, but answered in the affirmative.

"I see something happened while I was out though." Seraph said, changing the subject and laughing at Tonks blushing face and Remus' happy smile. "Maybe more then something. Remus, am I going to have to give you 'The Talk'?" Seraph asked, completely straight faced. Tonks fell off Remus' lap in giggles and Remus looked indignant for a moment before mumbling something about 'like father, like son.'

"Harry, er, Seraph, Dumbledore is going to come and interrogate you once he learns that you are awake. We made up a story and Dumbledore supplied his own thoughts on what happened so now they believe that your relatives were put under the Imperious and they let four Death Eaters in the house. You dueled with three of them while the fourth went to kill your relatives. You downed the two

of them and were in the middle of the third when Tonks showed up. You were exhausted by that time, fighting three at the same time. The fourth showed up and knocked Tonks into you. They left shortly thereafter and you passed out. Got it? Oh, and don't look into his eyes when you talk to him, he is a strong Legilimens." Remus finished.

"Yeah, got it. But I won't be staying here long. I have things that I need to do. Dumbledore's orchestrated my whole life, from where I was to live, to who I knew in the wizarding world. Hell, did you know that if it wasn't for Hagrid telling me that Voldemort was from Slytherin and that every witch and wizard that went there was dark, I would have been there? I have to go to Gringotts again soon. I was only there long enough to have the private will read, get emancipated, and see my vault. I did not look over my past finances, but I bet you I would find discrepancies there."

"He also put wards on the Dursley's home to keep Hedwig out and has had Ron and Hermione spying on you since at least last year. It could have been longer though, we just found out that they have been in the Order for a year." Tonks said.

"What did you say?" Seraph asked, his eyes gaining a slight fiery glow, the bit of silver that had been trying to show through surfacing a little. "How long have you two known that?" His eyes had died down a bit but the power had gone to his voice, frightening Tonks a little.

"Since last week, Ha-Seraph." Remus supplied, watching his friend's son deflate in anger a small amount.

"Bloody fantastic. The two people I should be able to trust the most have been spying on me. Fuckin' lovely. What about Ginny?"

"Not sure, but it is possible that while she may not have been brought into it. Dumbledore seems very keen on keeping tabs on you though, even more so then last year from what he said at the meeting. He may be able to get her to go along with it. We think that your 'friends' were bribed into spying on you, so it may just be a matter of finding what she wants." Tonks said.

“Do you know what they got out of this?”

“Ron made prefect and a spot on the Quidditch team. That much we know from Molly’s mumbling while cooking.” Remus said.

“And I saw Hermione talking to her mirror, practicing her ‘Head Girl’ speech.” Tonks supplied. Seraph just shook his head, trying to comprehend how little his ‘mates’ thought of their friendship.

“Does Bumbledore know about their being a new Head of Black?” Seraph asked.

“No, otherwise he would be trying to find out who they are and rope them in to joining the Order to be able to use the house. Unless he can hid it from them too.” Tonks said.

“Well, at least that is something good. I just hope it takes longer for him to figure out who it is then Remus did. I suppose I could invent some relative... Or I could make the house dormant... Or I could let him think that the new Head doesn’t know where the house is...bah. I’ll figure something out, or the Goblins will. Where is the good Madam? And Mad-eye? I need my clothes and I want to get this conversation out of the way.” Tonks said that she would go and get her and see if she couldn’t find Moody too. Remus pointed to the foot of the bed, showing Seraph where his trunk and items that had been rescued from the house were. Seraph stood up and began stretching his ill worked muscles. He was slightly wobbly after staying in a bed for a week but managed to stay solid by the time Tonks returned with Pomfrey, Mad-eye was out on assignment and he would have to talk to him later. The nurse shoed him back into bed before running a diagnostics spell on him.

“Well you seem to be in perfect health, Mr. Potter. Your core has fully regenerated, though it has gone through some changes. Care to explain?” The matron asked.

“Yeah, I think Hedwig’s soul going into me did that. I was told that she had given me the affinity of fire. I don’t really know how to use it, but I think it will come in handy.”

“And would you care to explain why you no longer look like your self? Or how you can keep such changes up while not consciously doing so? And who was it that told you that you were given the fire affinity?”

Seraph had to remind himself of what Meissa had said about Pomfrey and Moody.

“Those all have very simple answers, though I doubt you will be satisfied with them. I no longer look like myself because the charm that my mother placed on me when I was a child began to wear off. I don't know much about metamorphmagus', except that Tonks is one, so I can not tell you why I can keep the changes. That is something I wanted to ask Tonks about, actually. And I was told by the sire of my line that Hedwig had given me the gift.” Seraph told her.

“Mr. Potter, apart from your lack of knowledge concerning metamorphmagi, please explain further.”

“Well, they both tie into each other. I recently had my coming of age while in the coma and everything was integrated into my core during that time. I met some ancestors who gifted me with some of their abilities. Nice people apart from one, but he got over himself quickly. My ancestor told me both directly and indirectly who were my allies, and who were not. He said something about having ‘less and more on your side than you know’. From what Remus and Tonks told me, I have fewer friends than I realized, and I may have people in my corner who I had not considered at first.”

Madam Pomfrey pointed out that the Potter's did not have anything that resembled a coming of age until their magical maturation, which, while different for everyone, was still a couple years away for him, until it clicked for her. She then demanded to know who the father was, and was told, with the explanation of James' sterility given first. Now somewhat satisfied, the matron showed him to his clothes inside a small trunk, telling him that she did not want to know how he came upon such garments. It was about this time that there came a knock on the door, and Professor Dumbledore, as well as a few others were admitted into the room.

“Hello, Harry. I am very relieved to see you awake. You gave us quite a scare my boy. As I am sure Nymphadora and Remus have told you, we found you after the attack on your home. I am very sorry to tell you that all of your family has been killed by Death Eaters. I understand that this may be hard for you, but I need to know, and first hand information is always the best, Harry. Can you tell me what happened during the attack?” Dumbledore asked, face grim, sporting an uncharacteristic black robe and hat. ‘He really goes all out, doesn’t he?’ Seraph thought to himself. Dumbledore bringing up the death of his only living relatives gave him the perfect excuse to not look the man in the eye. Schooling his face and looking at his hands in his lap, he quickly thought about what he knew of wards, which was little, and remembered of Death Eater tactics, which were fresh in his mind.

“I was in my room, looking over some of my books and thinking about what my O.W.L. results would be when I heard my Uncle pull into the drive way. He and my Aunt Petunia had left earlier, I’m not sure why. A few seconds later I heard a screeching type sound. I went and looked out of my window and saw the air almost rippling before I heard something like someone apparating loudly and glass breaking. I knew that something had to be wrong, but I had not felt anything in my scar, so I did not think that it was Voldemort himself. I grabbed my wand and ran downstairs. There were four of them. One told Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia to go upstairs and followed them. The other three had already found Dudley in the kitchen. I knocked one out as soon as I got into the kitchen, and began to duel the other two. I was able to take down another one after a few minutes but I was having trouble with the last one. I knew that I could not take him down, as well as the other one, but I thought that if I set up a strong shield that I could hold out until help arrived. So I tried the ‘Tutela Munimentum’ shield. I had read about it before the end of term but I had not tried it out yet. I was able to cast it successfully, but it took out a lot more than I thought it would. I was starting to lose it when Tonks showed up. I assume that she was able to take out the others because I felt like I had nothing left to put into my shield and lost it, and I don’t remember anything after that except waking up just a few minutes ago.” Seraph finished, the same sad look on his face mixed with a small amount of fear that the old man did not buy it. To the others around him he looked like he was about to cry and Dumbledore ate it up apparently and put his hand on Seraph’s shoulder.

'Omitting the fact that he cannot be kept at his relatives' house any longer, I could not have orchestrated the effect that the death of his relatives is having on him better my self. While he is distraught, he can be molded so much easier, even though he may be more volatile. Caution must be used while handling him, I expect. Though he may not have cared much for his family, I suppose losing the rest of his blood kin has hit harder then he anticipated... So much the better.' Dumbledore thought, as he placed a comforting hand on the young boy's shoulder.

"Then it is as we thought. The sounds that you heard were the falling of the wards. Had you waited longer, you may have seen them crash, a most despairing and amazing sight. The 'Tutela Munimentum', that is truly amazing that one so young should be able to cast it successfully, let alone sustain it for a prolonged period of time. You are becoming a very powerful wizard, Harry. Sadly, with the death of your relatives, you have lost the greatest protection that you had."

"So then I will be staying here then?" Seraph asked, already knowing the answer already. "I mean, I did not really want to be here, so soon after Sirius' passing, but I think that I would like to stay with my friends." He said, nearly choking on the word 'friends'.

"No, Harry my boy. I am sorry to say that you cannot stay here. Even with its protections, this house is not safe enough for you. I have a property in my possession that I set up in the case that for whatever reason you were no longer able to stay with your family. It has vast protections on it and is about the size of a large flat. It features a large bedroom, self-filling kitchen, a cozy common, and a few magic windows that show a view of the Forbidden Forest, a nice place, all in all. There is also a large library there, many texts on Defense against the Dark Arts that you enjoy so much, as well as a few on other school subjects. I may even be able to get your required books for the coming year early so that you can take a peak at them before school begins. You will have to stay there of course, until your birthday. I think that you can stay here with your friends for that day and perhaps the next without much risk, but you will have to go back for the rest of the summer." Dumbledore said with a sad smile, taking his hand off Seraph's shoulder and standing up.

“Professor...”

“Yes, Harry?”

“What makes this place that you want to take me so much safer than here? I mean, this place is under the Fidelius, with you as the secret keeper. Just knowing that, I think, would make this one of the most secure places in Britain. And why did I not get anything from the ministry about my use of underage magic?” The last was asked to see what the man would come up with. If Dumbledore believed that he did not know why he had not received anything, then he may be less likely to suspect him.

“Well, Harry, you did not receive anything from the ministry because I have taken care of it. There were wards set up that had covered up any focused magic in place since your third year over the house, but they were tied into the blood wards and also fell. There was a second ward that was set up over your block that did the same, though it was much weaker, that filtered out some of the trackers that the ministry uses. They were notified of a large amount of magic at your late residence, but I convinced them to mark it off as accidental magic. I believe that the Minister would be very sore to know that an opportunity to further prosecute you had slipped through his fingers, and I doubt that him knowing that you lost your home and guardians by a team of rogue Death Eaters could be good for you. He would most likely attempt to become your magical guardian or make you a ward of some prominent pureblood family. The Malfoy’s, most likely, if Lucius had anything to say about it. The Dursley’s have been seen to and your house has been incinerated to destroy any remnants of wards. Sadly, Harry, we could not find your wand. We will have to take you to Ollivander’s before the end of the summer to see if he has any wands that will choose you. Perhaps Hagrid can take you through the Forbidden Forest to see if you come across any foci material that will work with you. It is not standard practice anymore, but will see what I can do. We will be leaving by Portkey at noon tomorrow. There is something that we should speak about before you go to bed tonight. I will leave you to your rest now.” Dumbledore smiled as he left, taking the unnamed Order members and an apologetic Remus and Tonks with him.

Seraph stayed in his depressed looking state for a few more seconds before getting out of bed to pace. 'Old man thinks that I don't know he did not answer the question. Probably does not have an answer, or did not think that I would question him. If he was telling the truth about those wards, then I could have been doing magic inside that house for the past two years. Damn him! What the hell does he want with me later? We're supposed to leave at noon, so I have until then to get out and come up with something to get them off my back...' It was at this moment that the door was once again opened, admitting three people. Two of which he had to restrain himself from whipping out his wand and hexing, and the other he had decided to save judgment for a later time. Ronald Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Ginny Weasley had just walked through the door to his room.

"Hey mate! How're you doin'?" Ron asked, far too loud for some reason. Seraph looked down and donned his 'sad' face again.

"Ron! He just woke up from a coma, and lost his last remaining relatives, how do you think he is feeling? No consideration at all, honestly. I am very sorry for your loss, Harry. How are you faring?" Hermione asked, a little too sweetly. To Seraph's ears, it was reminiscent to Umbridge, and just as infuriating. Seraph wondered if the two had always acted like this, or if they were just trying too hard to act 'normal'. Ginny gave them an odd look before sitting down in Remus' vacated seat, face slightly flushed, and sending looks Seraph's way every so often.

"I'm okay, I guess. I mean, it's not like I loved them or anything, but it's just hard, you know? Anyway, I'm here now. Dumbledore says that he's going to take me somewhere 'safer' tomorrow though. Wish I knew where. I mean this is under the bloody Fidelius, what's safer then that?" Seraph asked.

"Language, Harry, and I don't know. But if the Headmaster says that it will be safer then here, then it is safer then here. I don't see why you should question it, he's never lead you astray before. He has your best interest at heart, Harry. Trust that. You should feel honored that he cares so much about you. And you can come for your birthday, right? That should be fun." Hermione said.



"Yeah, we can throw you a party and everything Harry. Mum even showed me how to make her cakes. I can make them for you." Ginny put in, blushing furiously and turning away after her comment. Seraph just nodded, not really listening, nor seeing that Ginny too was acting 'odd'. The other three went on, discussing what had happened since the end of term, which wasn't much. Hermione worried about her OWLs, Ron talked about the Cannon's with little to no prompting and Ginny stayed mostly silent, offering a bit here and there. Seraph nodded, gave a sad smile, or made the appropriate noise when needed, but otherwise contemplated his situation.

"Do you guys know what's going on with Voldemort? Any attacks?" Seraph asked suddenly.

"Huh?" Ron said, "Oh, yeah we heard-" But he was cut off by Hermione with a not too subtle elbow to the gut, which had him bending over and wheezing. Seraph watched them a little more intently and their auras came into view. Ron's was unsurprisingly a gaudy shade of orange, but his outline was a muddy red color. Seraph got the impression from it that Ron wanted to hit her back, which surprised him. Hermione's aura, a light spotted yellow and white, with her outline proclaiming her to be worried. Probably thinking that she had not stopped Ron soon enough, which she hadn't.

"Oh! Sorry Ron, my elbow slipped. Come on; let's see if Madam Pomfrey can give you something for your stomach." She said, dragging him by his hand. Her aura outline suddenly took on the exact same shade of orange that Ron's aura was made of before they made it out of the door and Seraph blinked. "No, this way 'Mine. You can fix what you did..." Was heard from the hallway, Hermione's agreement could be heard until they had made it too far away. 'That is odd...' But his musings were cut short when Ginny suddenly took a seat in his lap and proceeded to kiss him, rubbing herself along his leg and moaning. Seraph was about to reciprocate when the whole wrongness of the situation made itself to his brain, and he pushed her to the floor.

"What the hell?" He said, standing up.

“Why-” Ginny began, but stopped suddenly. Her face showed confusion but her scarlet and silver aura was projecting a number of emotions that Seraph could barely identify before they changed. A fiery red of passion gave way to hurt, to anger, then confusion, before turning to understanding and sickly yellow shade of queasiness. Her face flushed completely and she ran out of the room. ‘Fucking nut house, this is! I’ve got to get out of here, soon.’ He thought as yet another being made their presence known.

“Seraph! Seraph, Seraph, Seraph!” Came the excited and worried yelp from underneath the bed. Some scratching could be heard before Cheleb’s head made its way out. “I was so worried when you didn’t come. I tried to find you, but your scent ended at this empty place. It smelled horrible, actually. So I tried to see if you left a scent through the shadows, and it lead me here. I thought that there were some people here who may have wanted to cause you harm, so I hid under the bed.” Cheleb said, obviously proud of himself.

“What are ‘the shadows’, how did you get through the Fidelius on the house, and have you been under the bed the whole time?” Seraph asked, worried that something could get through the charm, and that Cheleb had not eaten in over a week. ‘I haven’t either, for that matter’ He thought as his stomach made a loud rumbling sound.

“The shadows... are the shadows. I don’t know how to explain it better than that. That’s how we travel so fast. Grims live in both places, I guess you would say. There are other things that live their too, like uhm, the cold ones, and the smotherers. There are other things too, but I wasn’t told too much more. Even if you did not leave a scent in the light, you leave one in the other. The wizards leave them all the time when they move from place to place, you can almost see the trail. And I don’t know what a ‘Fidelius’ is, I just followed the trail. And I was under there, or with the Vulcan man to eat. He is worried about you too.” Cheleb told him.

“Cold ones, Dementors? And the other one must be Lethifolds. That’s not surprising. Gives me more to think about. Meissa could blend into the shadows, he must have been tapping into this. Maybe he wrote something about it... I’m glad that you found me. Thank you. The bad

smelling place was my home. Dumbledore destroyed it after my cousin killed Hedwig, my owl. I think you two would have gotten along well. Anyway, to make a long story short, my relatives are dead, my owl is dead, and I am staying in a crazy house at the moment. Were going to leave, very soon. I have a couple of things to take care of, and then we make our escape. Keep hidden, but stay close.” Seraph said, deciding on writing a letter to Remus, stating that he had to get out and where he might get in contact with him. He pulled out a piece of hair and put it into the envelope, hoping that Remus would smell it once he left, and placed a sticking charm to it, sticking it to the inside curtain of the bed. He had just finished when he heard Mrs. Weasley shouting for dinner.

He made his way down to the kitchen to see Ginny, whose face was a crimson red, speaking to Dumbledore, who looked a bit irritated, before nodding. Ginny ran out of the room, and Dumbledore made his way over to him.

“Harry, I need to speak to you immediately. Meet me in the library; it is the first door on the third floor. I will be up there shortly. I am sure that your food will still be warm by the time that we are done.” He said, before walking off through a door Seraph had not noticed before. Seraph tried to see Dumbledore’s outline, but he made it through the door before he could. He made his way up the stairs, softly warning Cheleb to be on his guard. At the landing for the third floor, a large moving ornate door could be seen. A beautiful mahogany wood door depicting a wizard attempting a spell he had just learned from a book on a pedestal in front of him. Every so often the wizard would turn a page and attempt another, sometimes exchanging a book for one of the many behind him. Seraph shook his head and entered, slightly amazed that he had never seen moving wood before, with all the animated objects he had seen. He was browsing through the books, waiting for Dumbledore when he heard a small ‘crack’ behind him. One word ran through his mind. Kreacher.

The damnable little creature apparently had not seen him or was as usual, ignoring anybody who happened to be in the vicinity. The thing was mumbling about the disgrace that ran through the hall of his masters like a plague, when Seraph felt something. It was like a tingling, burning sensation under his skin, both warm and cold.

Unknown to Seraph, the mark that Hedwig had left had turned into the rune of fire, silver in color, outlined in black, and slowly made its way towards the palm of his left hand. The sensation increased and ended in his hand as Seraph stepped forward.

“Kreacher...” Seraph growled, freezing the poor excuse for a house elf in his tracks. While Kreacher could not understand Grimtongue, the fact that the one before him could speak told him all that he needed to know.

“M-m-master! M-master is the P-pott-ter boy? Filthy half-bread, disgrace to the name of Black. B-bu-but how is, is it poss-” But he was cut off by Seraph grabbing him by the neck and lifting him up until he was level to his shoulders.

“You, Kreacher, have shamed yourself by betraying your master. You lied when questioned about his whereabouts, and told his secrets to the enemy. Through your betrayal your late master died. As head of the Black family, and master of its servants, I reserve the right to execution. Any last words?” Seraph asked, his voice carrying a powerful undertone that made Kreacher’s hairs stand up.

“Kind M-master put Kreacher’s head with his s-sires.” It said.

“Put your head along the wall with your ancestors? Not likely, vermin. That would be an honor. No, your life and treachery end here and now.” Seraph said, gripping the things throat until its eyes nearly popped out and it was blue in the face, feeling that burning, tingly feeling again. His palm began to glow, and Kreacher gasped in agony, stopping after a moment because he no longer had any breath. The glow turned into a dark flame that covered his palm and spread over the struggling elf. Seraph suddenly pushed the sensation through his hand and Kreacher was blasted across the room, a trail of fire following him. The elf slammed against a wall, covered in black and silver flames. The body stopped struggling after a moment and the flames consumed it, leaving no trace behind. It lasted only half a minute to totally incinerate the elf. Seraph sat down at one of the desks that were littered around the room, studying his palm and trying to remember the feeling again until he heard a light growl from Cheleb and looked towards the door.

“Harry, my boy. I am sorry for having kept you waiting. Now, the reason I have asked you here is to explain Ms. Weasley’s behavior. I understand that the two of you had an awkward moment, earlier today, yes? I must apologize for her. She wished for me to be a matchmaker of sorts, and assumed that I had already spoken to you about it, impulsive thing that she is. And before I forget, Madam Pomfrey gave me a nutrient potion for you.” Dumbledore said, conjuring some pumpkin juice and pulling out a medium sized potions container. Seraph could practically feel Cheleb’s unease and tried to see Dumbledore’s outline to feel his intentions, but was not able to. He was able to see the potion though. It glowed the same colour that made up Ginny’s aura, outlined in a broken grey that made Seraph think of chains... or bindings. A potion that binds to a specific aura... his mind kept pushing the events of earlier in the day before his mind’s eye. Hermione’s odd aura, Ron’s intentions towards her, Ginny’s behavior. She was shocked that he did not automatically return her affections. And somehow Dumbledore was behind all this, she would not have run off to him if it was otherwise, and Dumbledore had said as much. Then it clicked.

‘That is what Ginny wants. Me. If I am somehow bound to her, and Bumbles controls her, he could get me to do what ever he wanted. To make sure that I stay under his control. Matchmaker my ass, more like a slave trader. Hermione must be bound to Ron then. I guess Weasley wanted more then just a spot on the quidditch team. Maybe there is an antidote. I’ll look if I have the time, but those two deserve each other.” Seraph thought as Dumbledore finished mixing the potion and juice, and handed it to Seraph.

“I think that I should eat first. I may not know much about potions, but nutrient potions on an empty stomach have side effects I’d rather not deal with.” He said, about to put the goblet down.

“No, Harry. This won’t take long. Just finish the potion and I will explain a few things to you.” Dumbledore said, pushing the goblet back into Seraph’s hand, perhaps a bit more firmly then he needed to. Obviously the man did not want to deal with this right now.

“Sir, why didn’t Madam Pomfrey give me the potion when she was checking me over-”

“Drink the potion, and you may go. What I need to say is very important.”

“What is this sir, really?” Seraph asked, catching Dumbledore off guard, positioning himself best to run from his seat.

“A nutrition potion that Mada-”

“Bollocks.” Seraph said, throwing the goblet at the old man’s face and bolting out of the library. He slammed the doors shut and pushed that burning feeling through his hand and melted the handles and locks together. Brilliant wizard that the old man was, locking a door outside of magical means would probably not occur to him for a minute. He made it to his room and grabbed the small trunk that held the clothes that he was found in and quickly put them on. He put on his cloak, muttering ‘conceal’, as he put the hood up, and got into his school trunk and grabbed his photo album and cloak, and the Marauder’s map, but left everything else. He wouldn’t need any of the rest. Besides, he wanted it to look like he made a badly planned and hasty escape and too many things gone would be suspicious. His album would probably be forgotten by anybody searching through his trunk, as he did not leave it out or let anybody look through it, and his cloak might raise a few questions, but he needed it. He donned his invisibility cloak before re-shrinking his trunk and placing it on his finger and stepping out of the room. It was at that moment that a tremendous boom shook the house and splintered pieces of wood rained down the steps to the second floor.

“Shit. Cheleb, were leaving, now. Can you carry me through the shadows?” Seraph asked. If he couldn’t, then he was going to have to hope that he could make it through the floo damn fast.

“I think so. I’d probably move slower, but I think I could.”

“Good. As soon as we make it out of the door, I want you to take us to Vulcan, got it?”

“Yes, sir!” Cheleb said in his sarcastic military like salute. They had to make it through the front door first, otherwise Dumbles might think that he had an alternate mode of transportation, and the more aces he had up his sleeve, the better.

“Harry Potter! Come back here this instant!” Dumbledore commanded the power in his voice nearly visible, actually sending ripples through the air around him. He might have obeyed, if he was Harry Potter and if he had been close enough, but Seraph had already gone out the door, having blasted it off its hinges in a burst of accidental magic stronger then he had had in ages, leaving a mutilated door frame and a screaming portrait in his wake. Cheleb practically dove into a shadow just passed the steps to the house, Seraph barely hanging on by the scruff of the Grim’s neck. The ‘shadows’ was not just shadows. It was like a whole other realm. Colors were only seen in a grayscale and people were hard to discern, though buildings, lights and darkness, even magical residue was easy to see, especially just before Diagon Alley and the magical districts. Though, at the speed that they were moving, separating anything was a bit of a challenge. It was odd though, like traveling through water, the atmosphere was denser, but did not hinder movements. And there was less pull to keep him on the ground, allowing Cheleb to make great bounding leaps and sometimes simply glide. In fact, it was as if the ‘shadows’ knew how and which way you wanted to move and pushed you along. Seraph understood now how Grims could move so fast, while being such large animals, though it did not explain why Dementors did not move quickly. He did remember that they were able to nearly fly around the quidditch pitch during his third year. It was not long before they stopped in Vulcan’s shop, Seraph feeling like he fell into a pool, only backwards. He had to hold himself up by a table for a moment to get used to regular movement again, and looked at Cheleb.

“I have got to learn how to do that.” He told his companion, a true grin making its way to his face.

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“Professor, what’s wrong? Where is Harry?” Hermione asked as Dumbledore made his way back into the kitchen after having silenced

the portrait and fixed the door. 'He is getting strong indeed; the front door was utterly destroyed. He could not have known what the potion was, he is terrible at them! Perhaps he was warned before hand? No, no one besides the youngest Weasley's know about it, and they would not tell him. I am glad that I had turned my head when he tossed it at me, otherwise I may have been bound to Ms. Weasley. Why would he not trust me though? He may have resented me from keeping the prophecy from him, but he should not have reacted so. I think I came on too strongly, but the idiot girl forced my hand. If they were not so useful I believe that I would toss the lot of them out. When he is found, I will have to bind his will to mine; he has become too untrusting, too independent, perhaps. A weapon cannot think for itself, now can it?' Dumbledore thought, before answering.

"Mr. Potter and I had a discussion just now, and like last summer, he reacted badly. He has just run out the door, no thought to the dangers. He must be found, and quickly. Remus, begin searching the area; he could not have gone far on foot. Molly, Arthur, check the Knight Bus and see if they have picked up or dropped off anyone disguised or possibly invisible. Tonks, go to the Leaky Cauldron and wait there, he may have tried to get to Diagon Alley through muggle means. Mr. and Mr. Weasley, accompany Remus and Tonks. Ronald, Hermione, clean up the debriefing room. Report anything via the 'Phoenix links'. I'll see if I can bring any body else in on the search and tell you if we have found him. I must stress the importance of finding him soon; I don't believe that he was in a rational state of mind."

Arthur and Molly Weasley immediately shot up out of their seats, intent on calling the Knight Bus as soon as possible. They were quickly followed by Remus and George, and Tonks and Fred. Once outside, the twins hung back for a moment, a silent conversation taking place. Nodding, they grabbed their partners by the shoulder to stop them.

"Were not helping." They said in unison.

"Well we weren't planning on doing much either, just go through the motions. But why do you not want to follow Dumbledore's orders?" Remus asked, relaxing slightly. The twins were unpredictable, but strong in what they felt for certain matters. Had Dumbledore gotten



them to follow him blindly, he and Tonks may have been in some trouble.

“We have our reasons to be loyal to Harry,-” George said.

“And despite what Snape and our Mother may think, we are not stupid.” Fred finished.

“We see what is going on,”

“How Ron, Hermione, and even Ginny act-”

“Around Harry. Always trying to get him to run to Dumbledore for every little thing,”

“When the man ignores him for the whole year. And getting things that they don’t deserve.”

“Who the hell decided that Ron was ‘prefect’ material anyway?”

“But back to the matter at hand. We don’t like the way that people treat and talk about him. What Dumbledore says is law, and no one will stand against it. And when they do, he ignores them. Like when Tonks tried to keep Harry here, he just went on like no one said anything. We would have spoken up we thought we could be of more use if our loyalty was not in question.” Fred said, speaking for his brother who was nodding along.

“That’s a good idea Fred, George. I have a feeling that Dumbledore will keep us out of the loop if we keep speaking out against him, or put us on out of the way missions. You two will have to learn Occlumency if you haven’t already. Dumbledore is a powerful Legilimens and likes to keep insights into people’s minds. Till then, avoid eye contact. We knew that he would leave soon, but I did not think this soon. He must have seen an opportunity and seized it. Keep us posted on anything that we don’t know and we will try and keep him posted. He has secrets that Dumbledore can not find out, and I would feel better if he were to tell you himself.” Remus said.

“I agree. I hope that he is okay. He never said if he had anywhere else to go. Come on Fred, let’s get to the Cauldron and have a cuppa. If we see him, we can give him a heads up.” Tonks said before she left with a ‘Pop’, which Fred soon followed.

“Come on George, we’ll walk around and see if he is hiding out around here. Why don’t you tell me some of your exploits from your school days?” Remus said, as they began walking down the street.

“Why would you want to know about our pranks? You were a teacher.”

“You could say I have a vested interest in the business. Though I have not been active for some years, my associates and I, well you could say that we made quite a reputation for ourselves. Mr. Moony, at your service.”

Ooo  
ooO

It was after midnight when everyone was called back to headquarters. Dumbledore had set up a little debriefing room for smaller meetings, and this is where they had assembled. Ron, and Hermione looked slightly put out, having had to clean instead of something more. Molly and Arthur looked disappointed that they did not have good news to report. Well, Arthur looked a bit disappointed. Molly looked livid, making strangling motions with a dish towel that she carried with her and mumbling things about 'stupid impulsive boys' and hoping this had not ruined her hopes of marrying her daughter into the Potter family. Tonks was once again sitting in Remus' lap, while Remus tried not to laugh at the looks of awe that the twins were giving him.

“Our efforts have not born us any fruit, I am afraid. Molly and Arthur’s queries have not turned up anything. The Knight Bus records do not show anyone, disguise or no, getting on in the local area tonight. Remus and George tell me that apart from a wild crup in the area, they did not see anything. Tonks and Fred were able to see a few known Death Eaters did not see Mr. Potter at any time.” Dumbledore told them, nodding to each when he spoke of them, the twins looking over his shoulders or at his chin.

"The rest of the Order will be brought in tomorrow. We will search all of Britain if need be, but he must be found. His safety is paramount. As are all my students. Mr. Weasley, Ms. Granger, you have an assignment." The two perked up at this.

"You two will be monitoring signs of Mr. Potter in Diagon Alley. Look around, buy a few things, ask some questions. If he is there, someone is bound to see him. You will be given an allowance each day, spread it around. Do not spend it all at the Quality Quidditch Supply store," He said looking at Ron. "Or Flourish and Blott's." He finished, looking at Hermione. "I want you there an hour before the stores open until about five in the afternoon, when you will be replaced by another pair. I will draw up a map and assign the rest of you and the other members of the Order members sectors which you will be responsible for. I believe that we all should get some rest, we have a long day ahead of us." Dumbledore finished. The assembled part stood up and stretched; intent on going to bed. Remus was on his way to his room when he decided to check Sirius' room, the room that Seraph had been staying in only to find the room torn apart, and the contents of Seraph's school trunk strewn all over the floor.

"Must have already been through here." Remus mumbled to himself. "You'd think he would be less messy." He was about to leave, having found nothing more significant than Dumbledore had when he caught the scent of Seraph, though it was faint. He pulled out his wand and followed it to the inside of the curtain on the four poster bed. Stuck in one of the folds was a letter. A quick 'Finite' later, he had it opened and pulled out a letter and a lock of hair.

"Clever, Seraph. Now let's see what you had to write..."

To he who smells the letter,

This letter is to inform you that by the time you read this, I will have left. Hopefully in a more subtle way than blasting out the front door, but I have no plan and I'll do what I must. Once I make it to my destination, I will be safe, though the journey through may be less than amicable. I have an old friend who runs a fiery shop in the night alley, should you need a contact. I'll try and stay in touch. Once I

figure out how to keep the flash fried chickens off my back, I can keep you up to date.

Till then,

Orion

Remus smiled at the letter. It was a bit vague, but easy to understand. He supposed he signed it 'Orion' should anyone but he find the letter. He decided he would show Tonks the letter in the morning, and maybe the twins also. But now, he needed sleep.

Ooo  
ooO

"So you are the famous 'Harry Potter'. That is surprising." Vulcan said. "Do you know why you had your choice early?" Vulcan asked over the dinner table. He had only changed his appearance back to how he should look when Vulcan walked in to his back room and had been about to pull his wand on him. Once Seraph had made his presence known, Clotho had insisted that he eat immediately, and cooked a heavy meal despite the lat hour. 'He needed his protein after sleeping for a week and a half, after all'.

"It may have been the way that I was conceived, or for convenience sake. I mean, I was out for a week, with my core nearly empty. I could see them using that to get it over with." Seraph said, throwing a large piece of chicken on the floor for Cheleb, who was lying under the table, head rested on Seraph's knees.

"Perhaps. You were given many passive abilities that can be used actively. 'Language' is useful if you are out of your native land, or if you were lazy with things like runes. I myself have mastered 'Mechanics' and my wife has nearly mastered it. It is how we run our shops, makes us better at our craft. I can teach you a bit, it you're interested. Custom weapons are always the best, though I don't think that you will find a better pair of blades anywhere. And once you connect your mind to your magic, your mind gains a natural defense. It's not strong, just enough keep out a novice Legilimens. But at least

you know that you will never be tainted or distorted by using the Dark Arts.” Vulcan said thoughtfully.

“I thought that my mind and magic would already be connected. And what has that to do with being tainted?” Seraph asked.

“They didn’t explain anything to you, did they? Nope, don’t expect they would. You were given certain abilities. These abilities are still locked to a point. Which means that you have to actively unlock them to use them. You did not receive ‘A greater connection of mind to magic’; you received the ability to connect the two. You would not have to worry about the Dark Arts tainting you because your magic would protect your mind from their influence. It is not so much a rare ability as it is a mostly forgotten one. Those who do not have strong wills or are weak -and use the Dark Arts- are ensnared by them. Others are attracted to some of its power and become addicted to it.” Vulcan explained to him.

“The Lestrangle woman is highly addicted, I believe. As is Narcissas’ husband. Or perhaps simply too power hungry.” Clotho commented.

“If Lucius Malfoy is ‘too power hungry’, I wonder what that makes Voldermort.” Seraph said, idly poking at the rest of the meal he was given. You’d think the woman was trying to stuff a turkey or something. Luckily Cheleb was only too happy to help out.

“A monster? Anyway, what do you plan on doing now, young master?” Vulcan asked.

“Go to Black Alley and train. I have books, a couple portraits, and a few ideas. I think I can do well.”

“Books can only get you so far, you need first hand experience. I have training dummies here, if you want to use them, and I know a few people who are masters of their craft. They might be willing to ‘help out’, should they be sufficiently motivated. And what do you plan on doing to keep Dumbledore’s men off of you?” Here, Seraph gave him what he had long ago dubbed the ‘Black Grin’. There were varying degrees of the grin, ranging from mirth with a hint of feral, to

vengeance with a hint of feral. Right now, it promised nothing good to anyone but him.

“I have an idea. I may need your help though, how good are you at body transfiguration and how real can you make your dummies?” Seraph asked, the perfect solution playing in his head.

“Not bad, I was pretty bored and irritated after the Crusades -stupid, needless war- so I took it upon myself to teach a few people a lesson. I learned how to transfigure a person to look like another race, and made them live like that for the rest of their lives. Many became Muslim priests if you would believe it. And the dummies are generally as life like as possible, down to the intestines, veins, and blood. It doesn’t help to train on a ‘doll’ if you don’t know how it will affect the human body, does it? What do you have in mind?”

“I am going to get the Order and the Death Eaters off my trail in one swift move. Show me the dummies and I’ll explain on the way.”

Ooo  
ooO

It was two days later that Seraph got the opportunity he was looking for. Actually a day later. It had taken a day for Seraph to program the dummy after he learned how, and it took Vulcan about an hour to transfigure it too look like an exact replica of Harry Potter, down to the unruly hair and scar. The dummy was currently the size of an action figure, resting comfortably in one of his pockets. He had followed them from ‘Madam Malkin’s’ to the Leaky Cauldron. Someone gave them some money, apparently, as Ron was sporting a new cloak and Hermione a large bag of some sort.

“I don’t see why we should be out here looking for Potter. I mean, he was the one stupid enough to run out of the house.” Ron grumbled to Hermione as she paid for a couple of butterbeers.

“Now Ron, he may be impulsive and stupid at times, but he has his uses.” Hermione replied, taking a long sip.

“Yeah, name one.” He spat.

"You're wearing one, you arse. And he calls Potter stupid." She mumbled to her self.

"Well I say we let him go and get himself killed, he doesn't even have a wand anymore! Dumb bastard, probably dead already." Ron mused. "You think he left a will?" He asked thoughtfully.

"Black's will has not even been read yet. And if Potter dies, then the Black fortune goes to Malfoy or Lestrage, not something we want. Of course, I'm sure that the Headmaster can keep it away from them, should he die. And even if the Headmaster won't tell us what it is, Potter is very important to the war. And remember, if the Black fortune goes to anyone besides Potter, we won't get anything, even if the Headmaster can keep it away from them."

"Why's that?" Ron asked with a frown.

"Because it won't go to Potter's vault. If it doesn't go to his vault, it cannot be transferred to ours. I must have explained this too you five times in the last day." She said, exasperated.

Seraph decided to make his move now, changing his appearance to that of Harry Potter in one of the corners of the room.

"So this is how I'm talked about behind my back!" He shouted, causing almost all of the occupants to look at him.

"Harry! There you are. We have been looking for you all over the place. You have had us worried sick. Come on, Dumbledore gave me a portkey if we found you." Hermione said, reaching for his hand.

"No. I left, I'm not going back. And answer the damn question. You were friend with me just to get my money? Please tell me there was more to it then that." Knowing full well that for Ron, there hadn't been, but not sure if Hermione had ever really been his friend.

"Yeah, there was more. I got to be prefect, and Dumbledore said that I can be the captain next year! I don't get you, Potter. Money, fame, power, you have it all. And you don't use a damn bit of it. You could

have any girl you wanted. You could wake up with a different one every morning. You cou-"

"How long." Seraph interrupted.

"Before first year for Ron, and after being petrified for me. How the hell could we be friends with a walking time bomb? You attract death and destruction like a rampaging Iron-belly! But the Headmaster convinced us to stay close to you, keep tabs on you. And we did, for a price. We were both promised to become Prefects, Ron got on the team, and I got privileges to the restricted section and the time-turner. When it was reopened, we became members of the Order of the Phoenix, unlike you who can't seem to hold a conversation without screaming at someone. I regret my decision though sometimes...I think I could have gotten more for having to deal with you." Now people were mumbling, asking themselves how anyone could betray their friends like that. They could not hear all of the conversation, but the bits that were shouted filled them in.

"That's my girl!" Ron said. "You're going to be obliterated by Dumbledore anyway, so this is my chance." He let go of Hermione and put his fists up. "Come on, Potter. Let's see how man you are!" Was the cry as the pureblood attempted to fight Seraph, muggle style.

The fist came high, nearly connecting with Seraph's forehead. The second came for his face, or would have. The offending fist seemed to slow down, as did the sound and breathing around him, until it was nearly stopped just in front of him, and Seraph dodged, and grabbed Ron's arm, applying more pressure then necessary to the elbow, and pushed him down. Ron got back up quickly and charged at Seraph. Time slowed again and Seraph ducked down a bit and jumped up right as Ron's chest was above him, vaulting him up into the air and coming down with a very satisfying crunch over a table and it's chairs. Seraph was contemplating beating the pulp out of Ron or continuing with his plan when he was slapped, hard. The surprise hit actually sent him reeling, even though the hit was not sufficient to do so. A slight tremor ran through Seraph as he looked at Ron, who had managed to get himself up. There were lines, and a couple of dots here and there that covered him now, and he knew that if he hit him in those places hard enough, Ron would go down in extreme pain or



be incapacitated for a time. He smirked as he got into a balanced position.

“Come on Weasley, that the best you got? Malfoy puts up a better fight!” He taunted, and it worked. He the next fist slowed down again and he caught it, twisting it to the right, enough to cause some pain and the elbow to be pointing up. Said elbow was immediately broken as he punched it with his palm, continuing after the first bit of resistance. The lines that covered Ron’s arm turned a bluish color and he screamed. Seraph decided to make his escape now, and ran out of the Leaky Cauldron, dodging spells sent from Hermione, changing his appearance as soon as he hit the door. He quickly enlarged the dummy and activated it. Now all he had to do was watch his plan in action.

Hermione and Ron ran out of the Leaky Cauldron, searching for Seraph a moment later. Actually, Ron was doing more whimpering then running, but he was still looking.

“Where the bloody hell is he?”

“There, just in front of that bu-” But she stopped as a loud horn could be heard followed by screeching tires and a dull ‘thump’. They ran over to the front of the bus to see a body that was covered in blood, the bottom half stuck underneath the front tires. Dull, lifeless emerald eyes stared up to the sky, as if silently asking why. The matted hair was parted just enough to show a scar in the shape of a bolt of lightening.

“I’ll contact Dumbledore.” Ron said, cursing the idiot for getting hit by a bus. Hermione just nodded, not quite sure how to feel.

A man a few paces behind smirked and walked away, happy that it actually worked.

‘Now I can get down to business.’ He thought, idly wondering if Vulcan had put too much blood into the dummy.

(O)

End chapter

So what did you think? Hope you enjoyed it.

## Chapter 12: Finances and Funds

“What can I do for you, sir?” was the voiced question from the obviously annoyed Goblin, who had been busy counting what looked to be precious jewels.

“I wish to speak with Silverhook,” Seraph said.

“And what business would that be for, Mr.?” The Goblin queried.

“My name is of no concern, nor is my business. And to ask is against policy, Goblin. Now I suggest you do as I ask.” Seraph ground out, finding he did not particularly like this Goblin, whose aura, though barely noticeable, felt of arrogance and greed. Probably not much different from any other Goblin, but at least they hid it well enough.

“Very well, follow me.” It said reluctantly. Apparently Cheleb did not like the thing either, because he quickly lifted his leg and took aim at the goblin’s desk and let loose as Seraph and the goblin went through the doors leading to the offices. Cheleb joined them again after a moment with a Cheshire like grin; Seraph could almost imagine a wheezy laugh coming from his companion. They were led through the maze of hallways and doors again, until they came to be in front of the one they had come to see. ‘Silverhook, Black family Account Manager’

“Mr. Black, in business one does not usually show up unannounced, though, you are paying my wages, so I suppose exceptions must be made.” Silverhook said, with a bit of a smile, showing a few pointed teeth. ‘Goblin humor?’ Seraph wondered for a second before grinning himself, trying to match the goblin’s in inadvertent feral-ness, which made the goblin smile all the more.

“I’m sorry to have inconvenienced you, but I am sure that I can make up for it. I came because I have some more business to attend to. First off, is there anything left inside of any of the Potter Vaults’?”

“There is no money, if that is what you are asking; it was all transferred to the Black Vault. There are, however, the heirlooms and

storage vaults which have not been moved. Generally, one wishes to keep family artifacts separate.” Silverhook said.

“I thought as much. I need every vault that is under the name ‘Potter’ to be emptied and put into either the Black Vault in a separate section or in new vaults.”

“That can be done easily, though if you wish it to be done immediately, it will cost a bit extra.” The Goblin told him.

“Do it.” Silverhook summoned a few papers, signed some, burned others, and yelled at a couple of underlings. Within two minutes Silverhook handed Seraph a key, telling him that it was to his new storage vault, accessible only from within the Black Family Vault.

“Now why, may I ask, was that so important?”

“Because, Harry Potter has, sadly, he has died just moments ago. Hit by a muggle bus. Poor bloke never saw it coming.” Seraph said, as he wiped away a fake tear, Cheleb resting his head on his lap in mock comfort, which nearly made him laugh, but he fought it.

“Really now? Such a pity. And my brother spoke so highly of him. And with his death, so dies Albus Dumbledore’s control over his weapon and Lord Voldemort’s greatest thorn. You realize that when the Dark Lord is publicly recognized that they would look toward Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore, correct? You were his down fall the first time, so they may believe that you will be his bane again, most likely with help from Dumbledore. With you dead, they will have little hope but what Dumbledore can provide for them.”

“They can all bugger off for all I care. I said that I would do this for myself, not for them. I needed all of the Potter Vault’s to be emptied so that Dumbledore cannot get his hands on them. I believe he may have been getting into the Potter Vault’s before, would you know anything about it?” Silverhook looked around his desk for a moment, before finding what he was looking for, a large, flat, bowl looking device that held a clearish liquid that did not seem to be able to spill.

“I, Mr. Black, do not know anything about it. It is not my account to look after, well, wasn’t. But the former manager of the Potter account would know about any and all withdraws or deposits. It will be just one moment, sir. Front desk, bring me Dårlig.” The liquid that was in the bowl began shooting up, like a waterfall that went against gravity or a gyser, taking the shape of a Goblin with other Goblins working in the background. The Goblin nodded and the liquid dropped suddenly back to the bowl, never spilling or splashing a drop.

“Dårlig was the former Potter account manager. I don’t particularly like him, but he has gotten the job done with no complaints from you. Though, I suppose if your suspicions are correct it may be because you were not aware of him.” Silverhook looked pensive for a moment, before the door to his office was knocked on and a Goblin made his way in. Seraph wanted to groan. Not this goblin, of all goblins. Cheleb stood up and growled at the newcomer, who was sporting smelly wet shoes. Evidently Cheleb had had a full bladder.

“Dårlig, I want the account history of the Potter Vault’s for the last sixteen years.” The goblin, Dårlig, froze. His skin color losing a few shades. His eyes looked from Seraph to Silverhook rapidly. Whatever was keeping the goblin’s aura from showing suddenly dropped and Seraph saw he felt cornered, like a wild animal. “Not boy...” he mumbled, looking at Seraph’s forehead, or wear the scar should have been if it had not been moved to his chest when he had resumed his natural form. The creature was about to make a run for the door when Seraph whipped out his wand. In a few short seconds the goblin had been summoned and knocked out, then tied to a chair by Silverhook, and peed on again by Cheleb ‘for good measure’ the pup had said. The Black account manager called in some security, and several iron-clad guards quickly made their way into his office.

“Wake him up.” Silverhook told one of the guards. The guard complied, by smacking the bound goblin with the butt of his weapon rather roughly, which by all means should have kept him from waking up, but didn’t. Silverhook immediately placed both of his wrinkled hands to the goblins temples. Seraph could almost see the connection between the two, like a pale green line. ‘Goblin Legilimencey,’ Seraph a few moments Silverhook pulled away, a disgusted look on his face.

“Bring him before the Triumvirate. And may the deities have mercy on your accursed soul. Take him away.” Silverhook nearly bit out. The guards promptly escorted him from the office to wherever they were taking him and Silverhook took a moment to collect himself.

“Awwwww. I wanted to eat him. Can you call them back?” Cheleb asked, growling at the now closed door.

“No, I can’t imagine goblin tastes very good. Perhaps we’ll find that place in Knocturn again. They had good steak.”

“Mmmmm...steak.” Cheleb drooled a bit. They were interrupted by Silverhook clearing his throat.

“I must apologize, Mr. Black. Your suspicions were indeed accurate. Albus Dumbledore was appointed as your magical guardian and business proxy. This means that he was in control of any and all business decisions, in your best interests of course, until you reached majority. He came to us shortly after you were relocated, demanding the position as Magical Guardian and Business Proxy, but he was denied by the Goblin Council of Accounts. It seems that Dårlig was persuaded enough to appoint him anyway, allowing him free access to your vaults and monthly reports. Dårlig broke the cardinal rule amongst goblins, Mr. Black. He went against his own in favor of his greed, for a human. His case will be brought before the Triumvirate, and he will be disposed of accordingly. Gringotts takes full responsibility for the actions of its employees, you will be fully reimbursed for the...” He checked a note pad that he had scribbled a few numbers down onto. “19.24 million Galleons that have been taken since Dumbledore was appointed. And not all of it was taken by him either; Dårlig took a portion out every year for his ‘bonuses’. Truly despicable creature. You said that there was, other, business to attend to?” Silverhook asked, as if throwing traitorous colleagues out of his office was an every day occurrence. Seraph retook his seat and nodded.

“Do you know where withdraws that were taken by Dumbledore were put?”

"I would assume that he put them into his own vault or a holding place outside of Gringotts. The only vaults mentioned are to a secondary vault belonging to the Weasley family and a Granger family. I'm not sure that the head of the family, Arthur Weasley is aware of the secondary vault though. He has never gone there. It has been accessed though, by a Ronald Weasley recently, however. The Granger vault is what we call a 'Muggle' vault. It only holds muggle currency but it can be exchanged for Galleons for less than the usual transfer rate. And though it was set up for the Granger 'family', all reports have been sent to a Hermione Granger." 'When does it end?' Seraph thought to himself sadly. 'I had hoped that Hermione was at least somewhat influenced by the binding potion, but it looks like she has been on Dumbles payroll all along. She must have had at least some real loyalty to me, though; otherwise Dumbles would not have bound her to Weasley. I wonder if I would have believed anyone if they told me that my 'friends' were spying on me for Dumbledore...not likely.'

"I'd try to press charges, but Harry Potter is dead and can't. I'd see if the money can be taken back, as I never authorized these withdraws, but their vaults suddenly emptying would look suspicious. So, Silverhook, what can be done?" Seraph asked, rubbing the goatee he had given himself when he resumed his natural form again. Silverhook thought for a moment, before getting a small grin.

"We can stop their interest, which along with an increase in their vault tax should put a nice dent in to their 'savings'. Most of the old vaults were created before the tax, and are therefore exempt from it. But the new vaults, such as the secondary Weasley Vault and the Granger Vault are not. The tax is generally 1.5 percent of the total in the Vault. The less that is in there, the less we charge. We can increase it slowly, along with the amount of times that we tax them so that over the next year or so they will lose nearly all of the money in the vaults. And, as they will be away to school during most of that time, it is not likely that they will try to do something about it, even if they were to notice."

"Brilliant, Silverhook. I love it. To the next order of business. I recently went through my coming of age and became the heir to several

families whose lines had ended without appointing one. I wanted to know if this changes my standing with Gringotts at all.”

“Well, first we would have to test you to see if you are truly the heir to any other families. If you are, then you will inherit whatever is left of their assets, and if not, you will have lost a lot of blood for nothing. Now, you will need a ritual dagger, unless you have something that you would rather use?” Silverhook asked, as he pulled out a gaudy looking blade and a yellowing paper and a pan slightly larger than the paper.

“Yeah, I have a blade that I would rather use. What do I have to do?” Seraph asked as he pulled out his tanto. The small black blade glinted in the light, casting odd reflections on the glinting jewels that littered part of Silverhook’s desk.

“It is simple, really. Place the parchment into the pan, and state your full name. Then you must cut yourself enough to cover the entire document. We will know all that we need to know with a few moments after finishing.” The goblin said, handing the items to Seraph. He put the parchment into the pan, and took a breath, placing his hand above the paper.

“Seraph Orion Black” He intoned, not meaning to slip into Grimtongue. In the same breath sliced his palm from just below his thumb to in between his pinky and ring finger. He felt the sting of pain and gasped slightly. The blood dripped freely from his palm and fingers to the paper, making it glow. It took another two minutes for enough blood to cover the paper, leaving Seraph feeling slightly light headed. When the last drop hit the paper, it flashed once, twice, seven times. The cut on his palm glowed for a second and healed itself, the ritual complete.

“Now, let us see...” Silverhook said as he pulled the now completely dry reddish parchment out of the pan.

Sirius Orion Black, blood heir

Head of Black: Assets and Magic



-Stealth Masters

-Assassins

-Masters of Martial

-Masters of Grims

-Vault holds liquid assets, heirlooms, Potter family heirlooms, and Grims (accessible only to certain Heads)

- Properties; #12 Grimmuald Place, Orion Island, Silver Estate (locations unknown or held in Vault)

Magical Heir;

Gryffindor/Potter: Assets and Magic

-Ward masters

-Transfiguration masters

- Vaults held heirlooms, now reside in Black Vault

-25 percent of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

- Properties; Godric's Hollow, Cape Gryffin, and Dor Estates (location information held inside vault)

Slytherin: Assets and Magic

-Parsel Magic users

-Animation Masters

-Assassins

-Rare Snake Breeders

- Master of Serpents

-Vault holds heirlooms and Serpents (accessible only to Pasetongues)

-25 percent of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

- Properties; Serpens Hall, Slytherin Alley, Eltanin Estates (locations unknown or held inside vault)

Ross: Stocks and Magic

-Potion Masters

-Ritual Advisors

-Ritual Designers

-Controlling interest in Flytr Apothecary

Creo: Stocks and Magic

-Master Architects

-Master Builders

-Inventors

-Entrepreneurs

-Controlling interest in Magic Creations, Lunar Alley

-Controlling interest in Creo Laboratories (muggle industry)

Macualay: Vaults and Magic

-Mind Mages

-Healers

-Vaults hold liquid assets and heirlooms

## Linksys: Storage Vault and Magic

- Master Linguists

- Runic Masters

- Vault contains accumulated texts on Runes and foreign magic

“It seems that you were correct, Mr. Black. Very correct. The changes will be done immediately. Would you like all of the vaults to be the inside of the Black Family Vault? They vaults would be held within the Black vault, like the Potter Vault is. Also, I need to know if you also wish to begin combining the families like you did the Black/Potter families.” Silverhook asked as he passed the parchment to Seraph, who nodded his consent. Silverhook again went through a pile of papers, calling for family rings and subordinates while Seraph read over the list. After a bit the goblin Silverhook had sent to get the rings, Claudham, -if Seraph remembered correctly- came back with a large polished oak box.

“Ah, and here we are...” Silverhook said, as he opened the box slowly to reveal several family rings on a plush cushion. Seraph, remembering the process, told his ring to return to its natural form.

“The process must be done one family at a time, Mr. Black. Choose one and put it on to begin.” Silverhook told him. The first ring that he chose was a simple copper band that held no stone. As soon as he picked it up, however, small runes began to glow, giving the ring an ethereal quality. He put it on, and like last time, an image rose above both rings. The grim stared at the odd square-like rune that seemed to have feet. Seraph was trying to figure out if he had ever seen the rune before when a slight tremor ran through him, ending at his head and eyes, which were left aching for a moment. Looking at the rune again, he recognized it as Othola; rune of inherited property or possessions, spiritual heritage, aid in spiritual and physical journeys, source of safety... Seraph had to hold on to his chair, the foreign knowledge that had just jumped into his head making him feel dizzy. The rune suddenly flew towards the grim, flying around his head, sprinkling itself over the guardian until it was no more.

“We gain knowledge from Linksys, master.” The grim said, as Seraph chose another ring, this one being silver, holding a large snake with glinting emerald eyes. The image that rose up was one that he had only ever seen once, and was not sure if he ever wanted to see it again. A large basilisk rose from the ring, curling around itself, killing eyes staring intently into the Grim’s. The grim guardian disappeared, only to be replaced a moment later by the second guardian of Black, the black and silver Racer. The two serpents looked at each other, the Racer telling the Basilisk to bow before it and join the family, but the Basilisk was a proud and powerful creature, unmatched by any other reptile in the world. Seraph had to hiss at it before the basilisk finally bowed to the Racer, and lunged into it. There was a bright light and when it cleared, the Racer had grown a small amount, gaining a few green circular markings, and then it opened its eyes. They resembled Seraph’s now, piercing emerald surrounded by the always present silver.

“The line of Slytherin makessss uss cunning, we can use such serpentsss to our advantage, Massster...” The snake hissed, before it receded back into the ring. The next ring was made out of a swirling cloud like material that held a round opal stone in the center, making the shell of the armadillo that was depicted on it. A large armadillo emerged to meet the grim guardian. The armadillo stared at the grim before nodding its head, and rolling into a ball. The ball was quickly sucked into the grim, making its fur look a bit harder and sharper, more like armor.

“The Macualay’s make us the masters of our own minds, Master.” Seraph nodded to it before choosing another ring, this one oddly segmented and black with a purplish sheen to it that held fiery topaz stones as eyes for a roundish shaped head. Holding it, a large ant-like creature emerged from it. It had bright crafty eyes and three large segments that made up its body, each holding a couple of twitching arms with hand-like appendages on them. The creature was known as a Fossura Veneficus, or Mage Ants, or sometimes War Ants, due to their tendency to fight other nests. They are giant magical ants that are native to the Americas and are believed to have made the grand canyons over thousands of years. It studied the grim, almost trying to find fault with it, until it nodded and placed a hand on the grim

guardian's forehead and was pulled through the connection. The Grim shook its head and looked to seraph with its blazing eyes that now held the same sort of crafty yet mischievous glint that one would find normal to the Weasley twins.

"The line of Creo makes us ingenious, Master." The final ring was made of a light silvery material that held no stone but a simple design of an 'R' inside of a pentagram. A mist came out of the ring and it immediately was absorbed by the Grim, who simply gave Seraph a feral grin before it too receded back into the ring.

"Heir to seven families, Mr. Black. Seven is a very powerful number in our world, should you choose to use it, you will have considerable clout within the ministry. Though, you may not want to play your hand so soon?" Seraph nodded, thinking about what the goblin said, looking over the paper he had handed to him earlier.

"Silverhook, under the names, what does that mean?"

"Oh, lets see now... yes. They simply tell what the majority of the members of the families did as a profession or some ability that the family possessed. The abilities are almost always used to their fullest extent, meaning to somehow make money. Not all of the members of the families did or mastered what is said, but it is a brief overview, something that was related to them." Silverhook explained.

"And are these the complete listing of properties?"

"No, they are only the known properties. There may or may not be others, these are the properties that have deeds residing in the vaults.

"Can you tell me how much money is in the Macualay vault?" Silverhook pulled out a small ledger and looked over it for a moment.

"There was 8,506,010 galleons at the last withdraw in 1458. It has been sitting, collecting interest for the past 538 years. At 1000 years of a vault lying dormant and unclaimed, Gringotts takes over the vault and uses the liquid assets to upgrade security and heirlooms will go to pawn shops in Diagon, Lunar, and sometimes Knocturn's Alleys. The Macualay's were a fairly old and powerful family, so they were

able to get the high interest option. The current vault total is... 523,666,186. Would you like that transferred into the Black Vault or keep it separate?"

"Actually I would like you to start a fund for me. Call it the 'Potter Memorial Fund', or something sappy like that. I want to remain anonymous. No, scratch that. I want to make a 'will' stating that all of the Potter assets would go towards a relief fund. That should clear up any loose ends. I would like to have the money transferred to a separate vault and have it used for the fund. The goal is to help with relief work due to Voldemort. A lot of families are going to be devastated by the end of this war, on both sides. I want to try to use this to help people when the kid gloves come off. I don't know how long this war will last, but it is not going to be pretty." Seraph said.

"Did you not say, just moments ago, that the Wizarding world could 'bugger off'? Why would you wish to give money to a fund that would help them?" Silverhook asked, looking at it from a monetary point of view.

"I'm cutting off any guilt I might possibly feel. Everyone will have something to lose from this conflict, some more than others. I'm not heartless, I would rather leave all this shit, truth be told, but I can't. This war will end the same way it did before, and no one else can do it, as far as I know. I'm a major player in this, but I'd rather work without the control, complications or expectations that everyone would put on me. I'm doing this for myself, the money will help for the wake that follows." Silverhook gave him a hard look, before nodding.

"That can be done, certainly. Your will can be taken care of easily. Just sign here and I'll take care of it. We will send you reports on how the money is being spent monthly." Silverhook said, making a not on his notepad and handing a paper to Seraph to be signed.

"Can my father's will be changed at all? There have been recent developments that have come to my attention that may have changed the way it was written."

"The portrait of your father, if he so wishes may change his will. It must be finished a week before the reading though. Instead of the

echo giving the will, it will have to be placed in a portrait to give it. Your father's echoes will then merge, the older one retaining its memories and creating a new echo to read the will. Your father will then have two portraits that he has access to and can therefore move between them. Is that satisfactory?"

"Yes, very much so. I'd like to visit my vault quickly though." Seraph said, standing up. Cheleb also got up, stretching in his cat-like fashion.

"Very well. You have been charged 1,000 galleons for the movement of the vaults. You did wish it to be done quickly." Silverhook explained when Seraph raised an eyebrow. "The fund will be set up within the week."

The ride down the Black Vault was as wild as any other, Cheleb letting his tongue flail about in the wind. They entered the Vault and saw the new doors to the side, each labeled with their family symbol. Seraph went through each in turn, grabbing a few books that interested him on runes and foreign magic from the Linksys vault, A pensieve and a few a book on the history of mind magic and its uses from the Macualay vault, some magical tools and guides to basic to advanced magical building and design from the Creo vault, ritual items and moving representations of basic rituals and some potions equipment from the Ross vault and stepped into the Slytherin vault. Seraph grabbed anything that looked of interest, including a few journals of Salazar's great-grandfather that he had kept from the Guild on the creation of the Basilisk and development of Parsel magic, as well as a book on pureblood etiquette. He was about to leave when he saw a door towards the back. It was a door to another inner vault with an animated Ashwinder holding several glowing red eggs in its coils.

"What is held within the door, mother Ashwinder?" Seraph asked, hoping that the snake would respond better to a question than command.

"The nursery, speaker. It has not been visited for many years, not since that boy came through here, rude child that he was." The nursery guardian said, flicking her tail in annoyance at the memory.

“Riddle came through here then? I suppose he must have checked the vault before he attempted to steal the Black’s. Do you know what he took from the vault, beautiful guardian?”

“He entered the nursery and left with the egg of a magical serpent, I believe he said that he would name it Nagini or something similar. He demanded to know about any ritual texts with an emphasis on preservation. There was only one that I knew of, Eltanin put a copy of it into a journal of his. He and his associate, Knox, created the ritual, though Knox wanted to destroy all knowledge of it after the completion. Eltanin convinced Knox to hold it within his own vault, so as not to let it become known, while he copied it. Eltanin had no intention of using the evil ritual, but thought that it had promise for immortality. The name and theory behind it escaped the vault, how, I am not sure. I personally believe that Eltanin got drunk one night and told somebody, but I will never know. Eltanin said that a book held its name and theory, but nothing more than that. The boy took the journal and left, I don’t believe that he took anything else, master speaker.”

“Thank you. Do you know what the ritual was called or what it entailed?”

“I only know of it’s name, and how the master Eltanin spoke of it, Horcrux, he said. An evil and desperate thing, he had said. The boy did not listen long enough to heed my warning, though I doubt it would have stopped him. I believe that he sought power in any way that it came...Ambition is a family trait, but desperation does not suite the line well. Do you wish to enter, master speaker?” The ash grey serpent asked. Seraph thought about it for a moment, remembering what the snake on his ring had told him and nodded. The serpent hissed as the door slide open to reveal room that was filled with black heated sand. The eggs were divided into sections and descriptions were given in front of a group. A small podium stood in the center of the desert like room, a piece of paper on top of it.

Slytherin Nursery



Many serpents are housed here. All are frozen in time, to be released when they are to be sold or mated. Species separated by sections and subspecies separated into separate mounds. Each species has a description in front of it and subspecies further description. Sand is needed to keep eggs in stasis, otherwise they will hatch naturally.

Seraph began looking around at the different breeds that were half buried in sand. Ashwinder, King Cobra, Diamond Back, Pygmy, Blind, and a number of others that had no business being in Europe. A sudden pull brought his attention to a single egg that had cracks running down the side.

Experimental Breed: Basilisk bred with Russell's Viper, kept under an Augury until hatching. I hope to achieve a miniature version of a Basilisk that can be carried concealed on the body. Should have Basilisk's death stare or at least petrifying abilities, Previous experiments yielded several Basilisk sized serpents, non-magical, I've decided to call them 'Anacondas', and let them loose with a cousin in Africa. Other failed attempts came up with a Basilisk with more than one head but died shortly after being born, -somehow both heads swallowed each other during a fight- and a overly large Viper who had a potent poison, not as strong as a Basilisk, but more than the viper's and gave a prisoner a headache when forced to look into its eyes. Being hatched under a chicken was discarded and now I am hatching it under an Augury. Hopefully results will be successful.

-Eltanin; experiment A-0289

October 31, 581 b.c.

Seraph turned his ring into a trunk and opened it to an unused compartment and began filling it with the black sand. Once it was halfway filled up, he put the nearly hatched egg inside and covered it with some sand. He grabbed a couple of small eggs that were simply labeled Chameleon Snakes, male & female and put them next to the other egg. He was about to leave when he spotted a sign that said Basilisk and grabbed a male and female that looked to be frozen in the process of hatching and left the vault.

The next and final vault was the Potter vault. He spent a considerably longer period of time here than the others, looking at sleeping portraits, but not seeing any for his parents. He collected a good amount on books covering basic to advanced wards and a number of ward journals made by Potter's over the years. He also grabbed a book entitled 'Animagus, the full you' By Godric Gryffin before leaving the vaults altogether.

OooXoooooooo  
ooO

The atmosphere in the Order of the Phoenix headquarters was different depending on where you were at the moment. In a bedroom decorated in light blues, there was a young red-headed witch lying on a bed, crying hysterically, hating herself and everyone for the death of the one that she loved. She only ever wanted to love him, and be loved by him in return. Dumbledore had offered her that, and she readily accepted, even if she had to make him do things that may have been against his wishes or spy on him. Dumbledore assured her that it was for his own good, and it would have worked out well for her. She would have the one she wanted, forever. He wouldn't leave her for someone more pretty like Corner had, or tell her she looked too much like a boy to be with like Thomas had before the end of term. He would be hers. And all it would take was a potion, willingly taken. But now it was not going to happen. He was dead, and so was her dream. She held a still sharp but melted knife in her hand, Harry's knife that Sirius had given him, not sure if she wanted to cut herself or Dumbledore for suggesting the idea or Ron for encouraging her. She put the knife down and began crying again, looking at a waving picture of her love.

In a small potion's lab, a sallow skinned man hovered over a delicate potion, not sure whether he wanted to laugh at the idiot boy's demise or curse him for forcing his hand. He was preparing to join a side permanently. While the boy lived there was a slim chance that he would succeed and kill the Dark Lord, but with his death, no one would be able to. At least according to the 'prophecy' that that fool Dumbledore had told him. He already knew the beginning of it anyway; he was the one to inform his lord, after all, gaining much of his favor. The Dark Lord was not aware that he knew the full contents,

however. That was his trump card, which he could cash in as soon as he told his Lord of the boys demise. 'Boy who lived indeed' the greasy man thought. 'Killed by a bloody muggle bus. Oh no, the Dark Lord cannot kill him for all his power and cunning, but make him cross a street, and he dies. I would feel insulted if I were the Dark Lord. I better inform him before someone else does...' Snape thought, before placing a stasis charm on the potion and walking briskly to the apparition point towards the back of the house, stopping for a moment to listen to the conversation that was taking place in the kitchen and smirked, before leaving.

In the kitchen, however, one could find very tense, depressed, and a couple of very angry Order members. Few people, in the man's 150 plus years of life had seen him irritated. Fewer still had seen him angry. Albus Dumbledore was not irritated or angry at the moment. He was seething, enraged, livid, whatever you want to call it. He had just lost his weapon. And it was all their fault. He would kill them now, where they stood, if there were not so many witnesses, and memory charms were tedious, best not to mess with so many.

"Tell me again, Mr. Weasley, how it is that you were confronted by Mr. Potter and then let him escape?" Dumbledore asked in a forced calm that was lost on the idiotic child.

"Well, you see he came up to us, all high and mighty saying-" Ron started, only to be cut off by a bellow.

"SILENCE!" Dumbledore shouted, the power from the voice once again nearly visible. "You let him get away. You were given explicit instructions. Should you see him, you were to force him to use the portkey. Instead you decide to banter and then fight him. A fight that distracted both of you long enough for him to get away. You made a scene in a public place -which will most likely end up in the 'Daily Prophet' in the morning- before chasing him into the muggle world, directly into traffic. Your privileges-" But he was cut off. Albus Dumbledore, most respected wizard of the age, and many after, he liked to believe, was cut off.

“So what, he was dumb enough to run into the muggle thing in the first place.” Ron said, and was about to continue when a hand was put over his mouth by his girlfriend, but he threw it off.

“Why him, what is so special about Potter, huh? What is it that he can do that we can’t? How was he supposed to bring down you-know-who if he can’t cross a street? You can take him down, so what did we need Potter for?” Ron asked, having enough sense not to yell at the man before him as he would anyone else.

‘Why does he question me? Insolent child. What should be done? Ah, that could work.’

“SILINCIO!” was the spell that finally shut him up. Shot by Dumbledore, the bright beam hit the Weasley in the head and nearly knocked him out by the sheer power behind it. It would take several adults to undo it, or several days to wear off, and none of the wizards or witches around him looked ready to help.

“I do not believe you understand the severity of the situation, Mr. Weasley. Voldemort has returned. The minister has not seen fit to tell the public about, but when he is forced to acknowledge that the threat is real, where do you think that people will look to? Whether they will admit it to themselves or not, the wizarding world at large sees Mr. Potter as their savior, their saving grace. I may be seen as the leader of the light, but many will expect Mr. Potter to take that mantle from me when he is ready. They would look to him, once again, to save them.” He took a breath. “And because, Mr. Weasley, I cannot defeat Voldemort. Mr. Potter was the one destined to defeat...” But he trailed off, a sudden thought occurring to him.

‘How is it that he is dead? Poppy’s report confirmed that it was indeed Harry, but it should not have been possible. According to the prophecy, only Voldemort could kill him. By his hand... I suppose that any Death Eater who was ordered to kill Potter may have been able to, it would be an extension of his hand, then again it could be a literal meaning...Still, he is dead. I wonder...And he will mark him as his equal... It is a long stretch, but possible. He has shown no natural talent in, well, anything really, but perhaps he was marked in other ways? If nothing more, it will distract them until a better solution

presents itself. It will look better if it were someone else who figures it though. I can place the blame on them, should, or more precisely when, the boy fails...' Dumbledore thought, a plan emerging.

"There was a prophecy made not long before the fall of the Potter's. It told of a Wizard who would be able to rid the world of the Dark Lord. While it may be void now, it is essential that you tell no one.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives..."

Dumbledore finished, waiting for someone to ask the question.

"Professor, was Harry the only one who could have been the one? I mean, there must have been others who were able to defy you-know-who three times and lived to tell the tale." Hermione pointed out, and Dumbledore had to hold in a smile. 'Just a bit more...'

"Yes, there were. But there were only two couples who were pregnant at the time. One pair died October 31, 1981. The other pair resides in the long-term ward at St. Mungos." He said, sadness seeping into his voice.

"Longbottom?" an Order member asked incredulously. "You're joking, right?"

"This is no joke, Mr. Doters, nor is it a laughing matter. Mr. Potter and Longbottom were both candidates for the prophecy. But, as Mr. Potter was 'marked', I believed that he must be the one."

"But if he was, wouldn't that mean that he would still be alive?" An Order member asked.

"Yes, which is what is bothering me." Dumbledore said.

“Professor, are you sure that Harry was the one who was marked? Obviously he was marked, but could the prophecy have meant another type of marking? Like mental scars?” Hermione asked. ‘And there it is...’

“Ms. Granger, you may be right... Harry survived the killing curse, a feat that is thought to be impossible, leaving physical mark. According the Auror reports, and correct me if I am wrong, Alastor, young Neville succeeded in surviving the Cruciatus curse, as an infant. Something that should not have been possible. He was made to watch his parents tortured to insanity and then tortured himself, longer then his parents were, correct?” Dumbledore asked, looking to the ex-Auror Moody who nodded, remembering the report that had been written with the help of a few healers, not liking what was going on but having his suspicions. He would have to speak with Poppy later; there was no way in the depths of Atlantis that the boy had finally succumbed to a damn muggle bus.

“Perhaps Mr. Potter was supposed to help Mr. Longbottom... pave the way, so to speak. Thank you, Ms. Granger, for bringing the possibility to my attention.” Dumbledore said, a small smile making it to his face, though his eyes still did not hold their customary twinkle. ‘These people are too easy’

“I will think on this more and speak to Mr. Longbottom soon. Perhaps it would be a good idea to move him here. Molly, if you would be so kind as to make supper? Thank you. I must return to Hogwarts and prepare. Tomorrow will be a long day, I fear.” He finished, and flood out of the house. Moody looked with his eye, searching the house for a moment, before he spotted them sitting in the room that Remus was sleeping in nowadays. He made for the room and was actually beat there by the Weasley twins who obviously knew that something was up as well.

“Alright, tell me exactly what is going on here. And why do you have no wards up? Anybody could have walked in or over heard you. Constant Vigilance people!” The old grizzly man said before casting numerous charms and wards over the door and room.

“Happy now, Moody?” Tonks asked from her usual seat of Remus’ lap. Moody just grunted.

“Poppy, what is going on? I don’t believe for a second that the boy could have been killed by a damn bus. He had more sense than that. Something has been off from the beginning, and I want answers.” He demanded, and got them, the discussion leading up to Seraph’s escape.

“What made him leave like that, do you think?” A twin asked.

“He was speaking to Albus before he left; I saw them go towards the library. Something that Albus did or said set him off, and I doubt that it was Potter just ‘reacting badly’. I’ll check with Albus and see what he tells me though. Now I want to know about the body.” Moody said, looking at Poppy.

“The body that was hit by the bus, was not Harry Potter, only a likeness of him. It wasn’t even a body, really. I’d say more like a doll or a lifelike dummy.”

“How real?”

“The skin was made of an elastic substance that I have never seen before, but felt like human skin just after death. The hair was real, just duplicated. The bones were real bones, just transfigured to be nearly identical to Mr. Potter’s. Whatever this thing was, it would be ideal to practice healing spells on. The organs were functional, but not connected, except for the heart and lungs. The heart was connected to the veins and actually conjured small amounts of blood for a time after the ‘body’ was hit, resulting in too much blood to be normal. The blood was blood, but not human blood. The lungs were made to emulate respiration, but nothing more. There was also no ‘brain’ per se. It was simply a grey mass in the shape of a brain that was covered in runes. A muggle healer would never have known the difference, and I am the only medi-witch that Albus would let close to the body. The boy should have been in Slytherin.” Madam Pomfrey told them almost proudly. She had been nearly bursting to tell them, knowing that Remus and Tonks were very worried about him, but she had assured them that he was not dead, but would explain later.

“That sounds to me like a training dummy.” Moody said.

“Can they be made that real? I’ve used some that the Ministry has, but they are just animated wood basically.” Tonks said, remembering the pitiful things she was forced to fight during her training. The lumbering blocks were used in hand to hand combat, something deemed usable in a ‘worst case scenario’ by her C.O. They were slow, weak, and ungraceful. Not something that would fool anyone with eyes.

“They can be as real as you can pay for them to be. The Ministry is just cheap. I have an old friend of mine who might be able to make something like that. I’ve seen them, just not nearly as highly developed as that. He sells them to people who can afford them, mostly to some of the old families in Asia when they don’t want to take the chance of killing an opponent at the completion of training, and I heard a few wizards who hold muggle political positions in America use them as body guards. He’s a good character, but you don’t want to get on his bad side.” Moody told them, rubbing his wooden leg, wondering if he shouldn’t get an upgrade.

“This man, does he work in Knocturn?” Remus asked, thinking of Seraph’s letter, ‘old friend’ jumping out at him.

“Aye, why do ya ask?”

“I think that Se-Harry has been in contact with him. He said that he knew an ‘old friend who runs a fiery shop in the night alley’ I was wondering if they could be one and the same.” Remus told him. Moody laughed heartily at that.

“Best man the boy could have run in to, considering the folks about there. The old man runs an armory down in Knocturn. If the lad is smart enough he could probably learn a thing or two from him. I need get something better then this old peg with the way things are going, so I’ll be going to see him soon. I’ll take you with me; we can get some more answers then.” Moody said, standing up and walking out the door. The others discussed how and why Seraph did what he did for a while, before the twins left to get to their flat above their yet-to-



be-opened shop and Poppy went to check on something. As soon as they left, Tonks re-warded the door and conjured a picnic type basket and transfigured her clothing into a very short red cloak with a hood.

“Come here you big bad wolf...” She said, as she turned out the lights. A growl in her ear was the only response she got.

OooXoooooooo  
ooO

There was a loud knocking at his chamber doors leading to a place that few Death Eaters had ever seen, and few still had ever left alive. 'Why do they knock, you would think that they would learn by example.' The Dark Lord Voldemort thought. The last person who knocked on his door was quickly killed. Well, quickly as in he was ingested by Nagini. 'This had better be good...' he thought as he opened the door.

“Sseverusss,” He practically hissed. “You had better be here to inform me of something of grave importance...” He left the threat hanging. He smirked as he saw his spy look a tad bit more nervous then before.

“My lord,” He said, getting on a knee and bowing low. “I have two pieces of news that you will be very interested in, of this I promise you.”

“Very well, Severus. Come inside my chambers. Should this information prove to be less than satisfactory, you will not be leaving them.” Voldemort said almost pleasantly, opening the door wide enough to let the man through.

“Have a seat, Severus. Wine?” The Dark Lord asked.

“No, thank you.” Snape said absentmindedly, feeling a bit off center at having been invited into the Dark Lord’s private chambers.

“You are funny Severus, the wine, behind you.” Snape realized his mistake and hoped that he would not be killed for it. He had practically insisted that the Dark Lord should serve him something in

his moment of disorientation. He felt as if he was being played with, like a fly in a spider's web; one wrong move and he would be devoured. He poured a large glass of Château Le Pin Pomerol, and handed it to his lord. It was a little known fact that the Dark Lord had a passion for wine, something he picked up from his mentor before his defeat. The Dark Lord Grindelwald often made allusions to life from wine and chess, it made him appreciate the subtle flavors and learn to see beyond what was presented.

"Now, tell me. What is so pressing that you would attempt to barge into my private chambers to tell me?" The question came with a smile that promised pain.

"I know the rest of the Prophecy, my lord. I came to tell you immediately." Snape said.

"Indeed? And it is?"

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies ..." Snape finished.

"My, my. Marked as my equal, with a power that I do not know of, and only he can be my downfall... I have no need to fear the old fool then, only the boy. The boy should be my downfall, Ha! It is laughable, Severus. What power could he possibly have that I do not know of? He probably believes it is something daft like 'love' or some such nonsense. Tell me, how did you come to know the rest of the prophecy?"

"The old fool told me himself. He trusts far too much, my lord." Snape said with a smirk.

"Of course he is. You have pleased my greatly, Severus. And Lord Voldemort always rewards his followers. I will grant you a wish, Severus, for you have handed me that which I have sought after for

years. What do you desire?" Riddle asked, almost appearing to be in a good mood. Snape was not fooled, however. Should he ask for something beyond acceptable, he would receive only pain. So he took the easy way out.

"I wish only to serve, Master." He told him. To which the Dark Lord smirked and laughed, inwardly of course.

"A fitting answer. You, Severus, my most loyal, will be my adviser and second in command. Do not take what I give lightly, Severus. You will finish my noble work, should I ever be unable to. You are too valuable as a potions Master to have you lost in a battle, but soon you will not have any fear of that. No other Death Eater has shown me the same loyalty as you have, giving me the prophecy and gathering information while I was...detained. I will need you capable of leading and fearsome enough to keep the Death Eaters in line. There is a ritual that I wish for you to perform. Should you succeed, you will gain power that you can only dream off. I cannot have my second weak, now can I?" He asked, smirking at the Potion Master's twitch at his jibe. "You had other news for me, my Severus?"

"Yes, master. The boy, Potter. He is dead." Voldemort stopped in the middle of his sip of wine and nearly spit it out. The prophecy ran through his head a few times before he sat his glass on the table made of ebony and emerald in front of him.

"The boy is dead? DEAD? And you don't see fit to tell me this first? CRUCIO!" The Dark Lord screamed, but let the curse up almost as soon as it was cast.

"I am s-sorry, my lord. I believed that you would want to know the prophecy before knowing his demise, to know that no one can stop you, not that there was any hope for them to begin with." Snape said, only a hint of waver in his voice.

"Yes, only the boy could have defeated me... and he is dead? Truly dead, my Severus? This is most excellent, but there is an inconsistency; if not by my hand, then how?"

“By a muggle machine, my lord. He was struck by a bus similar to the Knight Bus. The school’s healer confirmed that the body was Potter’s and that he was indeed dead.”

“If Potter was the one the prophecy spoke of, how is it that he is dead?” Voldemort asked, leveling his wand at the man’s face.

“I don’t know, my lord. The prophecy is not overly specific, and I believe that he is grasping at straws, but Dumbledore now believes that the other boy could be the prophesized.” Snape said quickly, hoping to avoid another cursing. His last had been short, but more painful than usual.

“The other boy? The Longbottom boy? Surly you jest, Severus. You yourself have told me that he is practically a squib! What is Dumbledore playing at?”

“He knows that when you are recognized, the world will look for a savior. With the prophecy hanging over him, he must find someone to fill the position, since he cannot. I believe that he is going to try to supply them with one while he looks for something better or a loophole of some sort.”

“Conjuring hope, as the saying goes. We will simply have to kill the boy. I doubt he will pose as much of a problem as Potter did. He will most likely be protected by Dumbledore during the summer. I will speak to Lucius about setting young Draco on his first assignment in the coming term. I want you to take the Defense Against the Dark Arts position this coming term. I need you to gauge the training needed for our young followers, and insure their loyalty. I will verify whether or not Potter is dead through the link... Come, Severus. We will prepare for the ritual immediately.” The Dark Lord said, standing up.

“Yes, my lord. I live to serve.” The red-eyed man-thing gave a cackle at that.

“Yes, yes you do.” Riddle said. ‘And there will be no doubt of that once the ritual is completed...’

OooXoooooooo  
ooO

“Did it work then?” Vulcan asked from across the table. He rarely left his shop to travel Knocturn Alley, but there were a few places worth venturing out for, but Dionysus was one such place. It was a place of neutrality, doing business with Vampires, Werewolves, Humans, and the stray Goblin that came in from time to time. Good food, better wine and other beverages, and entertainment brought a multi-cultural clientele that worked well for the most part. Nobody messed with anybody else, though a death could be seen from time to time. Murderers were dealt with in the same manner. It helped that the owner, an old reveler going by the same name as his business, got along with everyone, or had enough dirt on the people who did not like him to keep them down. He was an old friend of Vulcan’s and Clotho’s, having the same ties as themselves to the old Guild. Meissa believed that if a servant was loyal and willing, let them live to serve the family through the generations. With the disbandment of the Guild, however, these semi-immortals needed something to do until they could once again serve the Guild. Many took their skills and went in to business, making a good living doing whatever it was that they enjoyed.

“O’couse it did, V! Your dolls and the boy’s plan? I bet you a case o’ me finest that it probably worked too well. Blood probably squirting over anyone who got near it!” Dionysus said, slapping his knee. Seraph just grinned, giving Vulcan all the answer he needed.

“See, I told ya! Now dig in boys, or your food will run away from ya.” The small man said. Dionysus was a shorter man with golden hair despite his age and a circlet of grapes and vines around his head that he refused to take off for whatever reason. While he may have matched Vulcan in age, a muggle would think that he was no older than thirty. He had been running his restaurant for close to 500 years now, having spent a large amount of time in Greece and Rome, growing grapes and olives. He had returned for news and never left, preferring to stay where many of his old friends resided.

“Alright, here.” Seraph said, as he put the extra steak he had ordered on the ground for Cheleb, who gave his thanks. “There was too much

blood though, Vulcan. Hit some muggle reporter in the face, she nearly fainted, I think.”

“Well at least it worked. So when do you plan on going to Black Alley?” Vulcan asked, breaking apart his steak with his hands. Dionysus could never understand why the man liked his steaks so well done.

“Later tonight, I think. I dropped some hints as to where my friends could get in contact with me, but I want to be settled before they come see me. I’m also going to need you to take me there; I don’t know where Knocturn Corner is.”

“That’s fine, I’ll take you as soon as we finish.” Vulcan told him, still banging his steak on his plate. He had had to repair it a few times before but did not seem to mind.

“Vulcan, Dionysus, Clotho, Vesta. Why do I feel like I’m in some myth?” Seraph asked, the odd names and there choice of business had popped into his head at random, and something seemed off. Both Vulcan and Dionysus were set off into rounds of laughter. Seraph didn’t see what was so damn funny, and neither did Cheleb apparently, as he began growling at the pair.

“Because sometime after the Guild was disbanded, everyone who was gifted with extended life by Meissa before he disappeared got together in Greece and Rome for a while. There weren’t a whole lot to begin with, but a few started families. Their offspring ended up having extended life times also, about 200 hundred years more then they should have. Well, at some point Dionysus here gambled with a local High Lord -Very powerful wizard, lot of money, land, and servants- and won his property, all of Greece and Rome apparently, though I don’t think the muggles knew it, and this huge place up on the tallest mountain in the country. He decided to name it Olympus. Well he gets drunk one night and stumbles into a muggle bar and starts spouting off about everything, his seemingly ‘immortality’, his ‘brothers and sisters’ who were like him, our specialties, hell, even our names. To muggles back in that time, it was a wonder that they did not kill him. Instead a scribe overheard it all and thought that he was a god, and convinced Dionysus to tell him all of his stories and

that of his 'brothers and sisters', most of which were made up or highly exaggerated. By the end of the night, the muggle had written down a small book of stories and passed out from exhaustion." Vulcan explained, before Dionysus began.

"Yeah, I woke up and started reading what the scribe had written. I couldn't remember half the stuff that was in there, but the man had written it like I was some sort of divine and him a prophet. I thought it was hilarious and took the book, leaving a note to the muggle that I would return it when it was finished. I read the rest of it and began to rewrite it from 'our' point of view. I figured I would write some sort of meaning into the stories and see how the muggles took to it. I even did two sets. One had our names as they were and the other had the planets we were born under or something else of significance and a few of the stories were altered but basically the same. The titans represented some of our enemies, rival Guilds and what not; Chronus was Knox's father, not a nice man from what I heard about him. Zeus and Hades were actually both supposed to be Meissa, showing him both light and dark, as he lived in neither spectrum. Some of the other 'gods' were his allies and us. We made up the rest of the 'Olympians' and some of the 'lesser gods'. Most of them were all made up, some were the sons and daughters of those who made families, actually. So, imagine my surprise when I find out that the scribe has started preaching about my stories, and people are listening! I got friends together every so often and put on a show for the muggles. Most fun I've had for centuries. Not everyone was too happy about it though. I sent them some wine and olives to shut them up. The muggles stopped believing in the old stories a while back when Christianity got big, and I came here." Dionysus finished, taking a large gulp of his drink.

"You single handedly started a religion that lasted for centuries, and own all of Greece and Rome? On a gamble and a laugh. Unbelievable." Dionysus just gave him a wink and poured another glass.

"Don't forget, I had my own following too, the Bacchanalia. Everyone loves to drink and party, so I made it mandatory for them. They also believed that I was the god of wine, relaxation, and fertility to a point. What they did when drunk was not my fault though."





## Last Time...

“Right here, young master. Look to the center of the wall.” And he did, thinking of where the alley was located. A wide set of stairs appeared to push the wall apart, leading to a set of monstrous sized doors. The doors held the same crest as was on Silverhook’s, and it stared down at him in the same way. His silver ring glowed before it turned back into its natural form, the crest standing proudly on the front of it. The crest on the door also glowed, and a faint light connected the two. The door finished glowing, and now resembled the ring more, that changes that had been made by combining the families apparent.

“Welcome Master, to Black Alley...” The Grim said, as the door opened up.

[illegible]

## Chapter 13: Getting Set

Who ever decided to name this place an 'Alley' must have had a gift for understatement or wanted to the name to project an image of much less then it actually was. However, 'Black' certainly fit the description. The entranceway was at least as large as the great hall in Hogwarts, the ground made entirely of onyx and marble, reflecting the nearly silver firelight that illuminated it. The ceiling was nearly indiscernible, being so high up that the light from the floating candelabras and torches nearly faded completely before reaching it. Greco Roman columns of obsidian were spaced apart by giant animated tapestries that showed the history of the line, from before the Black's were Black's, starting at a depiction of two men shaking hands. The two were holding an emerald green tablet with a large ruby in its center between them; the writing on it was visible but not legible. Descriptions were given under them, explaining what was going on in each. A man named Myrddin completing his life's work with his partner, Morgan Le Fey. Morgan attempting to steal the tablet and Myrddin's 'Book of Shadows'; his personal compilation of spells. The tablet was believed lost and the book a fake. Morgan being struck down before his daughter and son, Morgana and Knoxius. Morgana's rise to power in an attempt to kill Myrddin, becoming the

first Dark Lady in history, the believed capture of Myrddin in stone, the fall of Morgana Le Fey and the disappearance of Knoxius, who fled to Asia,.

On the other side of the hall, Knoxius was seen making his way through Asia, learning the language and customs, being recruited by group of assassins known as 'Shinobi', rising through the ranks, achieving the title of 'Master' and killing the head, the one who recruited him, to take his place. A prophet telling him that his son would be his downfall as he was his mentors. Knoxius killing every child he had until his wife transfigured a doll to look like their newborn child. The son, Knox, was taken to be kept safe away from his father. Knox training, developing gifts, and becoming an assassin himself, he became a master in the Arts, gathered people of skill and formed his own group, the 'Grim's Guild', learning of his heritage and killing his father, killing or imprisoning the rest of the still living Shinobi. The success of the Grims Guild, and finally the last tapestry, in a large opened field, what looked like twenty people were gathered in a circle around a man and a women having sex, fire and runes dancing about their bodies, until the light reached its brightest and the runes nearly screamed with magic, and shot into the man, just as he released into the woman. It was the conception of the Black line. Seraph was interrupted from his little lesson in family history when Vulcan spoke up from behind him.

"Your going to need a few house elves to take care of you here, as you can see from the entrance, it's a big place. Just ask where you want to go and the tiles will glow to show you a path. As good as it is to see this place again, I must be getting back, got a shop to run and all. I'll see you soon, young master." And with that Vulcan departed, leaving Seraph and Cheleb in the middle of the hall.

"You wont try to eat the house elves if I get any, will you?" Seraph asked, thinking about the grim wanting to sample a goblin.

"What's a House elf?" Was the response he got. Well, Dobby could take care of himself, he was sure. 'I can hire him right now, I think. He should be able to get in through the wards if I call him. Can't hurt to try I suppose.'

"Dobby." He said, wondering if the elf would hear his call or if he would have to send a letter? 'Can house elves read? Well, I suppose they must be able to. They have to read directions and notes and the sort...' His musings were cut off by a thundering crack that echoed down the hall. Dobby had just arrived, though he looked slightly disorientated, holding his ears and spinning slightly, carrying a bottle that looked suspiciously like butterbeer.

"Dobby, are you alright?" Seraph asked the dizzy looking elf.

"Hic', Dobby iees fine, m-master H-ha-, wha? You is not being Master Harry Potter sir! Master sir is being dead... I's be swearing vengeances on busses eberywhere! Socks in their pipeses! For master 'hic' Har'hic'ry Potter sir!" The elf was pissed out if his poor little mind and spinning on his heel, oblivious to his surroundings and Cheleb, who was now giving him a good sniff. The grim pulled back quickly though. Either elves did not smell good, or drunken elves did not smell good. Seraph could slap himself. He quickly changed his appearance to that of Harry Potter.

"Dobby?" He spoke up.

"Master Harry Potter sir!" Dobby shouted, running, slipping, and finally sliding to a stop at Seraph's feet. He quickly got up and gave him a large hug to the knees, sobbing loudly, his inebriated state disappearing quite suddenly.

"Master Harry Potter sir! How is you being alives? I is hearing Headmaster Dumbblydoor sayings to the portraits that you is dead! That you is being hit by a muggle busses!" Dobby said in a breath, quite a feat, Seraph thought, considering how small their lungs must be.

"Calm down, Dobby. Let me explain. My name is not Harry Potter. It's a long story, but I'm actually a Black. My name is Seraph Black." Seraph said, wondering if he should explain more to the excitable house elf. Oddly enough, this made Dobby even more excited. The grim decided that he did not like the excitable little... thing, and went to lay down at the side of the hall. He wanted a nap.

“Master knows! Master knows!” Dobby said over and over again, doing a little jig until Seraph stopped him by grabbing his shoulders and kneeling to eye level.

“What do you mean Dobby?”

“I always knows that Master Harry Potter sir was not a blood Potter. It’s in his aura, see? Sometimes it be changing, but it was always black and silver at its core. An aura of a Black. I is sorry, Master Black sir, but I was being under secrecy not to tells you. Master Padfoots talked to me’s sometimes, I would feed him after he escaped when I could, but he liked to be eating rats sometimes, ‘to practice for the traitor’ he said. He tells me about himself and you, and his history. He even asked Dobby how best to tell you! I sorry for your loss, Master Black sir, Master Padfoots was good wizard, and good doggy.” Dobby finished, his head bowed low. Seraph was not sure how to respond to that. Though he supposed he understood about the secrecy.

“Its okay, Dobby. I understand, for the most part. I wanted to know if you were interested in coming to work for me?” The house elf was jumping for joy before he even finished his sentence.

“Dobby be waiting for Master Black sir to ask Dobby! Dobby always hoped to be Master’s house elf! You is being the bestest wizard ever! Dobby is so excited! Yes, yes! Dobby will work for the great wizard Harry- er Seraph?” Dobby said uncertainly.

“Close enough. As long as you don’t call me ‘Master’ anymore, I’m fine. I get enough formality from the goblins. Okay, I want to know how much you get paid and what are your perks from Hogwarts?”

“We is getting a galleon a week if we wants paying, sir. And rotating shifts to have weekends off, though no house elf will take them, not even Dobby!” Dobby exclaimed.

“Right... well, how does 10 galleons a month, and you won’t take time off... so how about you take a few hours every day to do something you enjoy. Make socks; overthrow the muggle public transportation

organization, that sort of thing. What do you say?" Dobby thought for a moment, before looking around the hall.

"This be a big hall, Master Black." He stated simply.

"Yes, it is. What of it? And don't call me master."

"A place that be this big need more then one house elf, I thinks." He replied, looking like he was fighting a blush.

"Really now?" Seraph said, catching on to what Dobby was alluding to. "And do you have someone in mind, Dobby?"

"Winky!" Dobby said a bit too fast. "I means, Winky be sad that she cannot care for a proper home no more. She feels that she not being a true house elf. Dobby tries to help, even getting her to drop butterbeer, though Dobby got into it this afternoon... Well, I is being all she gots, and I feel bad to be leaving her." Dobby said.

"You have a point, Dobby. This place needs more then one house elf. Call Winky, and see if she is willing to work for me also." No sooner had he said it, Dobby was gone, and back in the time it took for Seraph to take a breath.

"What is you doing, Dobby? I was in the middle of a roast!" Winky yelled, before jumping behind Dobby at noticing Seraph standing there.

"Master Black wants to give us a job, for a real home! He used to be Harry Potter sir, but now he knows who he is being better then before." Dobby said. The explanation must have actually made sense to Winky as she too became excited.

"Winky would be honored! When will we do the bonding to the house and family?" Winky asked, bowing her head low.

"Bonding? I forgot about that... we can do the bonding for the house now, I suppose. What does it actually do? You won't be stuck here, will you?" Seraph asked, not sure what it entailed.

"No, Master Black sir. We bond to the house to learn it. What it needs, what be dirty, when someone not family be needing something. You hold our hand while we declare our intentions." Winky said.

"When we be bonded to yous, we has our magic cores altered. Dependings on the wizard, we might gain or lose power. Less power means that's it takes us longer to work, and we lives less. More powerful changes our cores to be likes the families' and we can live longer. Yous don't lose anything though, Master Black sir." Seraph nodded.

"Now I know that I wont make too much of a mess, but will two house elves be enough, Dobby? Winky? I mean, if the hall has anything to say, the 'alley' may end up being almost as large as Hogwarts." Seraph asked, remembering that Vulcan had said that entire families could live here.

"Don't worry, Master Black sir, Dobby and Winky be supplying you with elf kiddies real soon!" Dobby shouted, but then shut his mouth abruptly, his slightly pale and green face turning a deep red. A rolling pin popped into existence and Winky began to hit Dobby upside his head while cursing his mouth. 'Dear Merlin that's too much information' Seraph thought, as he attempted to calm down the 'couple'. It took a few minutes but he finally succeeded in banishing the rolling pin the Winky had conjured, though she still gave Dobby dirty looks while sporting a brilliant shade of reddish-purple.

"So, how is this done?" Seraph asked the two. Winky stopped giving Dobby looks and explained.

"We each will have to create a connection and Winky and Dobby will do the chanting. All you have to do is accepts, Master Black sir." Seraph nodded. Dobby began to make wide arcs with his arms, a look of concentration on his face. Shinning lines shot out of his fingers and laid themselves out on the floor. A perfect circle with three circles inside of it shone brightly on the floor. Winky positioned Seraph in the largest of the three circles while Dobby and Winky took the others. The two elves began to chant very quickly in barely a whisper, their high pitched voices making it sound like a ringing tea kettle. Seraph was not sure what to do now. The two elves rose into

the air, still chanting. As if guided by magic, Seraph raised his hands and placed them on their chests. The chanting slowed and then stopped. The elves still hung in the air, but they were both looking intently at Seraph. An unnatural glow was in their eyes as they asked.

“Do you, Master Seraph Orion Black accept Dobby and Winky as servants of your clan?” They asked as one with voices that weren’t their own. Their eyes pulsed with every syllable, and Seraph felt compelled to answer.

“I accept the house elves Dobby and Winky into the Black Family, and note that their servitude is freely given.” Seraph said, his voice reverberating around the hallway. The house elves heads shot back and they let out a silent scream as Seraph’s hands shot into the elves, directly into their cores. A flash of black and silver, a pulse of light, and a sound like a crack of lightening happened in quick succession. The circles on the ground faded away into nothingness and the elves drifted towards the ground. Seraph blinked to clear his eyes and noticed that Dobby and Winky had changed slightly.

The rags that they were wearing were replaced by a casual looking suite on Dobby and a slightly formal dress for Winky. The clothing was deep black with silver stitching with the Black Family crest emblazoned left thigh of Winky’s dress and a smaller version was stitched onto the left side of Dobby’s jacket. Dobby stood up and shook his head a bit and Seraph noticed that he seemed to have grown a small amount. The elf looked up at Seraph with a huge grin and began to bounce around, his eyes had gained a noticeable silver band around pupil. Winky did not seem to have grown but she did seem to be a bit healthier, more full, perhaps. Dobby took notice of this immediately after he stopped hopping from foot to foot and dropped his mouth, causing Winky to blush. Seraph cleared his throat. They looked at him and both leapt towards his legs, hugging them tightly.

“Thank yous Master Black sir, I is not feeling this good... ever!” Dobby nearly shouted. Winky nodded her head feverishly.

“I take it that you got something out of the bonding then?” Seraph asked. He was met with a pair of incredulous gazes.

“Master Black sir,” Winky began, “I is never feeling as powerful as I ams now. You is easily as strong as old Master Crouch was, and he fought the evil wizards before he went into politics! And you is still young, you get stronger, and we will get stronger.” Winky explained, trying to express herself. ‘Not strong enough though.’ Seraph thought. He briefly wondered if any rituals he may perform would help or hurt the elves, but put it out of his mind for another time.

“All right then. I have no idea how long this place has been without occupants, but I want this place clean, however big it is. The house will show me if I need to go anywhere specific, so I want this to be your first priority, got it?” He asked the two house elves. Their eyes opened up wide and large grins spread across their faces, disturbingly so in the case of Winky. They nodded and left with a snap of their fingers.

“Right, well, I suppose getting through the hallway would be the first step.” Seraph said to himself as he began to travel to the door on the other side. He continued to watch the tapestries as he headed to the door and made a note to come back to look over them in more than a passing detail. Massive ebony wood doors were what he met at the end. Like the doors to the library at Grimwald, it was animated with a moon and a howling grim running with a pack of smaller Grims. The alpha grim stopped and bowed to Seraph, before running off again. The doors opened and Seraph stepped through, Cheleb at his heels.

He stood before a massive round Zen garden filled with volcanic sand. Unnaturally tall bonsai trees could be seen growing out of the ground or from some of the large rocks that were scattered around the middle of the garden. The garden was perfectly round and must have had a several hundred yard diameter across. The space above was open sky, cloudless and colored a dark purple. The sun could still be seen at the horizon, but just barely. Several paths wound their way through the intricately designed sand, leading to a massive stone directly in the center. The Zen garden was surrounded by obsidian columns that were spaced evenly along the circular path that surrounded the garden. It reminded Seraph of the Vatican in Rome, apart from the heavy Asian influence. Along the outside path of the ‘Zen Courtyard’ there were several doors that led off to unknown



places. Seraph began to walk around the courtyard and noticed that as you walked along the path, you could not see further than a few feet in front of you due to the placing of the columns, another similarity. He passed many of the doors, most were solid wood, some were iron, some made of some sort of stone, and a few made of silver or simply paper and wood, like that of old Asian homes. He did not open any of the doors though, as he was content at the moment to observe the sand and the shinning stars that were starting to appear.

‘I wonder if that is why they built this the way it is.’

He soon came to the other side of the entrance and found a door that was quite a bit larger than the others. It was made of wood and paper, though Seraph doubted that anything could tear it. Seraph placed his hand on the door and tried to slide it. It would not budge. One of the panels of the door began to swirl around until a defined head could be seen in it.

“Who disturbs the masters keep?” A soft but throaty voiced asked.

“The master.” Seraph said.

“The master? Master is long dead. You are a Black for sure, otherwise you would not be here, but the master or a member would know how to tell the door to open. Go away; be gone to your chambers.” The head said irritably.

“Open up you insufferable gate!” Seraph almost literally barked at the door.

“Why didn’t you say that before? So a new master has returned... I’m overjoyed, full of rapture even. It will be many years until I can get a proper sleep again.” The door continued to mumble, even after it had opened and its words could not be heard due to the fact that its face had slide behind the wall.

“Who the hell gave the door that personality?” Seraph asked Cheleb, who just shrugged his shoulders and gave a wheezy snicker type laugh. Seraph shook his head. ‘Evidently no one but the master,

more than likely the head of Black that can speak Grimtongue, can access this part. 'Members' must refer to the Grim's Guild. Those doors that I passed must be the different chambers.'

Seraph stopped thinking about that as he took in the entrance way of his 'chambers'. It was huge. Nothing like the initial hall that they had come through, but it looked like his 'chambers' were more than likely a large mansion. Bright floating orbs of light lit the place, making the adornments on the wall shine. The floor was made of a single sheet of obsidian, and the walls were made of a light whitish wood that looked silver when moving. A huge fountain was in the center of the entrance depicting a large grim surrounded by a group of grims in a circle. The center grim shot up a continuous jet of water which broke into separate streams and landed on the heads of the other grims. Past the fountain was a pair of doors. On either side of the circular entrance were two sets of grand staircases, one that led to a second level, while the second set led to a barely visible third level. Seraph stood there, taking the sight in and felt something that he had only felt once before.

“Were home, Cheleb.” Cheleb grinned.

[illegible]

Seraph woke up feeling refreshed. He had explored a little bit of his new place of residence, but not much. He had found out that the third floor was made to be a very comfortable looking barracks, though that seemed like much too crude a word to describe the posh semi-apartment like rooms, most likely for members of the Grim's Guild. It had two hallways, an east and west that went on for sixty rooms both ways. All the rooms were very spacious. Each had a large bed –no two looked to be made the same way- a bathroom –most would put the prefects bathroom to shame- and a comfortable study area complete with desk, a bookshelf –most were empty- and a magical window. Obviously space increasing enchantments had been used liberally. There was a second set of stairs on the third floor that led to the Master's bedroom, which is where he was currently waking up from. His room was much like the others, only larger and with a balcony that overlooked the Zen Courtyard. There was also a large

portrait of a dark looking old man who reminded him slightly of Knox, but he had not woken up from what Seraph could tell. His floors were made of obsidian with large Persian rugs at the door and in the bathroom. Past a door in the bathroom was what looked like a piece of a rain forest. A short way inside of the 'jungle' was a 'bathtub', actually it was more like a large pond, nearly twenty feet deep near the cliff that was there and featured a very warm waterfall. Maybe ten feet below the surface in the center of the 'bathtub' was a submerged pyramid that must have been under a powerful disillusionment charm, as Seraph only found it by bumping his head into the top of it.

Seraph had put on a bubble head charm and swam around it and soon found an entrance. The inside of it looked to be a personal library and study. There was also a small bed to the side, a marble and stone chess set and an archaic and very empty looking pensieve. Not a sound made its way into the place, not that there was much sound to be made to begin with. A place of personal retreat, of perfect seclusion.

Not much of the second, or main floor for that matter, had been explored. The second floor seemed to be for recreation though, as the first two rooms he entered included large blocks of marble, wood tools, art equipment, several chess sets, gobstones and large targets on the wall that still had well made throwing daggers sticking out of them.

The main floor had an enormous sitting and dinning room next to each other, as well as many smaller and more private sitting rooms. The kitchen was almost as large as the one at Hogwarts, and from all the small doors that led from the back of it, could probably house just as many house elves. There was a set of stairs behind a large tapestry of a suite of armor that looked like it led down to dungeons, but he had not bothered to check it out yet. Seraph was very glad that he was not lodging as many people as the house could hold but was as equally happy that it could hold so many. When he restarted the Guild he knew where to house them.

He set out to look at the rest of the second floor and found many other game and art rooms, but also a couple of well lit potions laboratories, some ritual chambers, and an indoor quidditch pitch of

all things. He needed to start training and get into shape, and a large grassy field was as good a place as any. He would not be flying the brooms that he found, however. Most looked to be made out of fallen tree branches and looked like they would struggle trying to hover. Cheleb liked them though, to chew on and chase anyway. The huge puppy would pick one up and throw it with its mouth, not unlike what dogs might do with a stick when bored. Only the broomstick did not simply fall back to earth, it flew up high and glided back down a good distance away from where it started. Cheleb would chase after it and grab it out of the air about 15 feet up. Seraph marveled at this and chalked it up to the grim living in both realms at the same time. He left Cheleb their to play as he left to look around some more. The room across from the pitch held an armory. Well, not technically an armory as it seemed to be more of a museum of magical weapons and armors through the ages. Seraph spent close to an hour just admiring the ancient tools of war before he noticed that there were descriptions under each, but decided to check back later.

Further down the hall he found a set of double doors that were almost identical to the ones to the library at Grimmuald, the only difference being that the figure on the door seemed to be continuously writing with a sharp looking stylus. Behind them was a library that was just shy of the size of Hogwarts' own. Unfortunately, there did not seem to be any actual books, just scrolls. Picking one up, Seraph discovered that it was in a language that he had never seen before. When he tried to make sense of it, a jolt went through his mind and he felt slightly dizzy. It was Grimtongue, in a written form. The scratches and dashes that looked like they were made from a dog trying to write began to make sense, similar to the rune he had seen before.

## Guild Log

### Shinto, Guild Scribe

We were able to take out the "Gudos" with little difficulty. What their purpose besides being a nuisance is beyond me. As skilled as their cousins, the goblins, they should be able to better defend themselves. The world will not miss several tribes of substandard merchants anyway. The goblins won't for sure, seeing as they were the ones that paid us to do it. A little more than five hundred galleons were

'found' in the raid (how the little demons managed to amass that much is beyond even the Master's understanding), plus the six hundred galleon payment from the goblins gave us cause to celebrate. The captured Gudos are being used as fodder for his experiments. I can't imagine being able to use one of them in a ritual, but he has discovered stranger things...

## Guild Log

### Shinto, Guild Scribe

The Master tried to perform a ritual on those Gudos, but something went wrong. Not sure what, really, but now there are twice as many of them at a quarter of the size. Look like vegetables running around in rags. They have started burrowing in the outskirts of camp and have bitten anyone who tries to speak with them. It seems like their intelligence has diminished with their size, not that they were bright creatures to begin with. Only thing that seems to work is either killing them or using a confundus charm to make them forget what they were doing. Master is understandably unhappy about this. He wished to have them become gardeners, as many of our Herboligists our also our Potions masters. He has started cursing his failed 'garden' gnomes...

It was the history of the Grim's Guild. All of it, from the looks of the copious amount of scrolls that were piled, stuffed, and hung about the library. All the information that he needed to know about the guild and how to run should be found here, though there did not seem to be any order to the scrolls. Or maybe he just did not understand the system. Either way, he would look more into the history later. He laughed slightly at the thought of his ancestor creating garden gnomes and wondered of something similar had not occurred to create the grims.

He left the 'Archives' as he had decided to call it and seeing that there was nothing further down the hall, left to gather Cheleb and find something to eat. It had surprised him that he had not seen Dobby or Winky since they had bonded to him, though food still appeared when he was hungry, the only sound it left was the dish hitting the table, not even the telltale sound of elf popping.

“Dobby, Winky.” Seraph intoned. Two small silver and scarlet sparks were seen, barely noticeable and gone impossibly fast appeared in front of Seraph before Dobby and Winky replaced them. Seraph looked at their auras and saw that they were the same as the sparks that he had seen. ‘I wonder if I can see apparition as well.’ Seraph thought, before bringing himself back to the reason he had called the two.

“Dobby, Winky, were have the two of you been?” He asked.

“We has been cleaning, Master Sereaph, sir.” Dobby answered.

“Why is it that I have not seen you?”

“It is a house-elves job to remain unnoticed, Master.” Dobby said with a small smile. “But you would not have seen us in this part yet though. Dobby and Winky has been cleaning all night, but we have not made it to the Master’s home.” Winky told him.

“So where have you been cleaning?” Seraph asked, wondering if his elves had been cleaning other people’s homes.

“The other houses in the alley, sir. They be many, and quite large, almost small manor size, some. You would have had to have passed them on yours way here.” Dobby explained.

“The doors? So each one holds a small manor sized house. I guess Vulcan was not exaggerating when he said you could house entire families in the alley. How many have you cleaned?”

“Almost twenty, Master Black sir.”

“And how many more to go?”

“We is not sure yet, Master Black sir, but more then a hundred.”

“That’s fine. I wanted to let you two know that I will be beginning my training tomorrow. Were at war and I’m going to be a big part of it,

whether anyone knows it at the moment or not, understand?" Seraph asked. Dobby and Winky nodded uncertainly.

"We's will make yous good food, make you strong, give you more energy. My mother gives me the recipes to make the food that way. It will help!" Winky squeaked excitedly.

"If it is so much better then regular food, why haven't I heard about it?"

"Because wizards is not asking, and elves is not telling. It is what we elves eat usually. The elves at St. Mungos prepare their foods that way because they know it helps the sick wizards and witches." Dobby said. Seraph nodded. It wasn't hard to believe that the wizarding world would overlook potentially healthier lives because the ones that could provide the means to achieve it came from 'inferior' beings.

"Good, I look forward to it." Seraph said. Winky had gone directly to the kitchens and began to prepare a large meal. Seraph and Cheleb were treated to the best tasting food either had ever had. Cheleb was given a large steak, but Seraph was served a large Italian platter. It wasn't so much that the food was different from what it would have been before, it was just, well, enhanced. And it was delicious. Seraph thanked her for the meal, to which she blushed heavily, and said that he expected many more like, to which she nodded happily and left with slight snap of her fingers.

"Are we going to leave soon?" Cheleb asked through a large yawn, showing off his many sharp teeth.

"In a bit. I had not thought about it earlier, but I will need equipment to get into better shape. I would try to conjure it, but I'm not sure how long it would last and I am not very knowledgeable in their use. This means that we will be going into the muggle world. I want to look through some of the ritual books before we go though. There may be a few that I want to do in the next few weeks." Seraph told his grim companion. Cheleb shook his head, flapping his ears wildly and sort of just plopped himself on the ground and fell asleep. Seraph shook his head and took out his ring and changed it into his trunk. He went into the library and looked around until he found what he wanted, two

books entitled 'Rituals' and 'Advanced Black Rituals'. He sat at the small desk that was inside of the trunk and opened the first book.

Within these pages can be found the means to great and terrible power. But take heed, everything comes with a price, be it loss of sense, pain, or sacrifice. Every topic and its subsequent sub topics have at least one book, if not more on it. Rituals are not to be taken lightly, a mistake may cost you your life.

'Cheerful' Seraph thought. He flipped a page and found a table of contents.

## Rituals

### Blood Curses

Family: cursing your bloodline

Race: cursing a races bloodline

Mundane: cursing non-magical bloodlines

### Bonds

Willing: friendship, business, etc.

Marriage: Life bonds

Basic Oaths: Wizards Oath, Witches Oath, Truce Oaths, etc.

Enslavement/Unwilling: Oaths of obedience

Concubine

### Self

Sleep Reducing

Energy Increasing

Food Consumption Decreasing

Blood Thinning

Finger Dexterity enhancement

The topics under the Self Rituals seemed to go on and on. Some, like the ritual that increased your cores magic reserves and better night vision were worth looking in to. Rituals to give you an extra finger on your arm, were not. Others, like the ritual to give ones self the ability to possess any one at will were downright stupid to perform. Not because Seraph thought that possessing people was wrong, though being a victim made him want to never experience it again, but



because the cons heavily outweighed the pros. To perform the ritual you would need to burn runes into nearly every inch of your body and give up every sense that you have, and your body. Essentially you would become a near dead soul that could possess people. Not unlike what happened to Voldemort, when Seraph thought about it.

Many of the rituals that he was considering would be called 'basic', as the sacrifice was generally pain or a small animal for a small but permanent benefit. And while it was not technically a ritual, more of a process, a guide to Animagi could be found inside the book. He looked through the advanced book, and found a number of interesting rituals there, but none that he would be able to safely perform, even if he had been gifted to be better at them than most.

After an hour of looking through the book, he had written down a few rituals that interested him and what he would need for them. He wanted to perform the core increasing ritual and later the Maturation ritual, one because the Maturation ritual was part of the advanced book and two, because it would have a greater effect if his core had already been increased in size. There was a disease immunity ritual, which would protect you from most ailments, magical or mundane, the main ingredient was breath of a Nundu.

The 'Clear-Mind' ritual that lessened or neutralized the effects of mind altering potions, another that had the same effect for poisons. Those two had interesting effects though. Any ingested poison would be added to his blood and create an immunity to it. He was so interested in this one because if he had a bit of Basilisk poison still in his blood stream, no other poison would be able to affect him, and if not, he could get some from the chamber. It had the added benefit of turning his blood into a poison, a discreet weapon. The mind potion ritual worked the same way, only it did not alter his blood. If he could make or get his hands on Veritiserum and a strong mind controlling potion, he would never have to worry about truth or mind altering potions again.

A 'Stone-Skin' resistance ritual was also worth trying. It would increase the toughness of his skin, making it harder to cut or injure, the downside was that all of your skin needed to be systematically removed and replaced by the enhanced skin. Most unpleasant. After

this ritual he would need to use special Ritual Blades, as others would be much less effective at cutting him. The second level of it increased the density of your bones, making them nearly impossible to break. Every bone would have to be removed and re-grown, not only painful but potentially fatal if done incorrectly. There was a third level, but Seraph was not sure if he would do it, or any time soon if he did. At every joint and ligament in the body, a rune would be drawn. The corresponding rune would be drawn on the other side of the joint and on the next bone. The purpose of the ritual would be to make sure that your appendages cannot be severed, which would be convenient if you were hit by a Ribbon Cutter curse, or if you were Mad-eye Moody

Several eye enhancements had caught his attention as well, like the x-ray like ritual which had the added benefit that would allow him to see through simple illusions and a few more advanced illusions, namely Invisibility cloaks. That along with his scanning ability would make sure he was not fooled by them again. There was the 'Raptor-Eye' magnification ritual which promised him to be able to read a book a hundred yards away if he concentrated, and the 'Night-Eye' ritual, which would allow him to see much better night. The last 'ritual' he wanted to do was the Animagus one. It required a potion and the knowledge of what ones inner animal was, and Seraph was pretty sure what his would be. If it wasn't though, the potion, if made correctly, would force the transformation anyway, it would just be much more painful. His list of rituals that he wanted to do soon completed, he took Cheleb and left the Black Alley.

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He made it through Knocturn Alley easily. It was just going passed noon, and no one wants to mess with a dark figure in a hooded cloak who walks in the company of very large and potentially vicious dogs. He knew that wizards, especially the purebloods (and generally the most influential) frowned upon physical exercise, so it was likely that there was no magical equivalent to it. Just in case he was wrong, he decided to check at an Auror supply store called 'Auror Supplies'.

"What can I do fur ye?" Asked a small man from corner of the shop.

“I want to know if there are any magical equivalents to muggle exercise equipment.” Seraph told the man who was now itching his head.

“I dunno, wha’s ‘exercise equipment’?” The man asked a bit stupidly. Seraph wondered why wizards wanted to live such stagnant and magic dependant lives.

“Something you use to get into better shape, stronger? Bigger muscles? Increase your endurance, say for a duel?” Seraph asked, getting a bit fed up.

“Nope, can’t say we gots anything like that, but we got some new stuff that might help you. There’s stealth trainin’ boots, they force to walk all stealth like until you learn how to do it your self, and this gadget here.” The man said, holding up large leather bracer. “It’s supposed to force your magic harder, making your spells stronger. Boss calls ‘em ‘Pathway Trainers’ or somfin like that.” The man told him.

“What in the name of Merlin does that have to... forget it; I’ll take a pair of each.” Seraph said. They may not have been what he was looking for, but they would probably be useful. The slow man nodded and began punching things into a machine.

“That will be twelve galleons and six sickles.” He was told. Seraph paid and left quickly. Suddenly several screams were heard, some wailing, some cursing loudly, and a select few, though the sound was distinct and heard clearly, were laughing uproariously. Seraph bent down and picked up a discarded ‘Daily Prophet’.

Daily Prophet

The ‘Boy-Who-Lived’, Dies

Story by Omni Asoka

Tragedy struck just hours ago. The boy-who-lived, Harry Potter, 5th year Gryffindor, savior of the wizarding world, was found dead outside of the Leaky Cauldron. Muggle witnesses say that the late Mr.

Potter 'ran out from nowhere' and into to traffic. A muggle named Tony Waters had this to say:

"Yeah, I saw him come out from that alley over there, well I think it was the alley, but he came running like he had hell on his heels. Never seen anyone move that fast. He jumped into the road and dodged a couple of taxis, but it looked like he got clipped by a car and lost his balance in front of the bus. Poor lad never had a chance."

Why was Mr. Potter running? Was it Death Eaters? You-know-who? Crazy fans? No, eyewitnesses from the Leaky Cauldron tell of a different story, a sad story. Tom Leaky, owner and operator of the 'Leaky Cauldron' since 1896 had this to say:

"So sad to see young life snuffed in such a way. I had not seen Mr. Potter for a couple of years, the last time I did he stayed here for a time, just after Sirius Black escaped. Nice boy; always tipped. I did not hear the beginning of it, but I heard a great deal. A couple of his friends were having lunch, talking about Mr. Potter, and in no good way if it got that sort of reaction from him. He confronts them and they start yelling. They wanted to take him somewhere and Mr. Potter did not want to go. Then they started talking about why they were friends with him in the first place. Right shame, it was. They were using him! Friends since their first year, and they were using him. The Weasley boy picks a fight and got beaten from the start. Potter broke his arm and ran out of me pub, his 'friends' and some nasty looking curses following him. The world is a darker place without him."

Tom Leaky's sentiments were felt by most of the inhabitants of the Cauldron, except for one man in a dark hooded cloak who was beaten by a supporter of the late Mr. Potter and found to be a Death Eater, he was subsequently thrown into Azkaban shortly after the incident. We here at the Daily Prophet mourn the loss of such a great young man and send our condolences to his true 'friends'.

Cars are muggle vehicles used for transportation, not unlike carriages.

Taxis are small versions of the Knight Bus and much slower, prone to hitting things.

Mr. Waters memory has since been obliterated.

Potter history, page 12A

Harry Potter Biography, page 13B

'What, no Harry Potter Memorial day? I suppose a few people crying on the ground is worth it though. They can deal for now.' Seraph thought. He made it through the alley with no other events except jumping over a few young women rolling on the ground and breaking the jaw of a laughing person in a dark cloak. He transfigured a collar and leash for Cheleb once they made it into Muggle London. Cheleb protested about the evil thing around his neck until Seraph told him why he had to wear it, and a threat of no steak for a week. Seraph was given a few odd stares, though they were mostly from older women and business men who had no time for 'Goth punks' as one man called him. He drew some pleasant stares from a group of girls who he thought could pass as vampires, if it wasn't for the sun being out.

'Must look into this. Could be fun when I get some time.' Seraph thought to himself.

Since the cabs did not seem to like Cheleb too much, it took them nearly an hour to find a store that sold exercise equipment. Once there though, he found everything that he needed except for running machines, he was not going to need them. The helpful, albeit, frighteningly muscular woman helped him pick at a myriad of free weight equipment and several professional Nautilus machines as well as something called an 'Xvest' and it's assorted add on weights. The purpose was to increase the resistance and weight of your body to strength train while doing cardio exercises. He was also given a book on exercises and strength training and one on cardio workouts. Under the pretense that his uncle owned a gym and needed all new equipment, the lady sold him several of each item he wanted. They were brought out the back of the store where a few trucks would come by and pick them up. When she left, Seraph shrunk them and stuffed it all into a compartment in his trunk. All told, he spent exactly 30,759 pounds on all the equipment, close to 7,000 galleons. The

machines weren't cheap and he wanted to have many for the guild when it started up.

Seraph called the Knight Bus and took it back to the Leaky Cauldron. He made his way through Diagon quickly heading towards his next destination, Flytr Apothecary. It wasn't long before he walked into the dimly lit shop. The smell was actually bearable, compared to the one in Diagon Alley. There was a woman behind the counter, but she seemed to have been passed out for a while now, drool falling from her mouth. Seraph shook his head and wondered if he should fire her, before he noticed a glowing line that extended from her head directly to the back. He followed it and found that it went through a shelf that held an enormous supply of shriveled shark fin and a single broken bezaor. He twisted the hard yet oddly hairy thing and pulled. The shelves seemed to hiss and expel a white mist before they slide into the wall. Behind the fake wall a woman who looked identical to the other one up front pointed her wand at him.

"Who are you?" She demanded.

"Doesn't matter." He told her.

"Maybe it don't, but I don't get many coming through here. Who told you about this place?"

"A mutual friend, I'm sure. Why is someone so incompetent manning the front?" The woman smiled.

"A 'mutual friend' supplied me with a convincing helper. Can't actively control it all the time though, but I know when someone comes in and wants to buy." She told him. Seraph nodded and took out his list and began to look around as the woman began using her wand to change the style of her nails.

'Lets see, I need 'Re'em blood, Runespoor skin, Acromantula hair, and Acromantula eyes, Roc Claw, Manticore venom, Breath of Nundu, Dragon's retinal, Graphorn Horns...' The list went on and on. Most of the rituals required a potion, ritual daggers, sometimes the druidic chant but not always, and various other things unique to the ritual. He found the potions ingredients he needed and an advanced ritual

blade kit, some required to be soaked in blood before use and many others were dependant on the lunar colander and other cycles. He grabbed a few other required odds and ends before making his way up to the counter.

“Aren’t you the busy boy...” The woman said as he placed the large amount of items he wished to purchase on her counter.

“Something like that.” Seraph said simply.

“Self enhancements a tricky business, but worth it if you don’t die. This going to be it?” She asked.

“No, I need a few more ingredients from the other side of a more mundane nature, Bellsprout, powdered Griffin tooth, essence of Nordok-.” He was cut off.

“Animagus? Whyn’t you say so, got a kit right here for it. Got already made doses back here too, just add the blood, but most feel more comferable making it themselves, if they have the skill. More personal I suppose.” The woman told him as she handed him a shrunken box.

“Animagus kit plus the ritual blades, not to mention those ingredients... Re'em blood is not as cheap as it use to be... Roc Claw? Not many call for that... Nundu Breath... even fewer call for that... Twelve snow white rabbits, got those in the back...What are you trying to become kid? A few low level rituals and a couple of advanced ones... always be prepared, right? Comes to 5,719 galleons, 12 sickles, and a knut. Don't kill your self, we haven't had business this good in years.” The woman told him happily. Seraph did not comment on the fact that the owner was giving them the good business but paid her and left.

Seraph made it back to Black Alley without incident and enjoyed a small meal prepared by Winky before going to bed. The elves had been informed that he was to be woken up at six in the morning. Tomorrow would mark the beginning of the end of the war.

[illegible]

It had been three days now since the death of Harry Potter, and the wizarding world had taken it very well, in Albus Dumbledore's humble opinion. Much better than he had hoped. 'I only saw twelve people on the ground of Diagon Alley openly weeping.' He thought. Much better than the twenty five he had counted a couple of days earlier, though the laughing Death Eaters, or supporters at least, laughing had irritated him a bit. It was worth it when a man broke one of the laughing men's jaws though. The pained man had been found to be a Death Eater once at St. Mungos. 'One less Death Eater, too many to go.'

He had just sat through another Order meeting where he had told those idiot children that under no uncertain terms would he protect them from the press. The Weasley boy had stormed off, cursing with his girlfriend hot on his heels, balling her eyes out. He had sent an owl to the Longbottom Manor just earlier this morning, but he had not been contacted back yet. He thought about the Longbottom boy, and how he would break the news to him. He briefly wondered about just forcing a controlling potion like he had planned to do to Potter, when he realized who he was dealing with. Potter was easily controlled for years without aid, Longbottom would be much easier.

'All I have to do is gently ease the boy into a friendship with Granger and the young Weasley boy. The child has no friends, so accepting a couple should not be difficult. If he stayed here he would see that the war is indeed happening, not like he would not know from the Department of Mysteries, and I could drop subtle hints about training. Get those idiot children to convince the boy of the importance of it, and of course, the rare opportunity to be taught personally by myself and I will have him. I can have Severus teach the boy Occlumency and try to implant a link between the boy and Riddle, perhaps a variation of the Dark Mark, but in his mind? A soul bonding would work much better if it could be achieved... Once he is confident enough in his abilities I will explain the prophecy and my reasoning. If a soul bond cannot be established, it is critical that a mind link is. Once it is strong enough, I will send the boy to fight Riddle. Riddle will kill him and the link will force him to die as well. If he possesses all of his soul anyway. I fear Riddle has done something terrible to himself, but I have no proof. Well, not enough proof as to know how many.



The Potter boy already destroyed one soul; I'm not sure how many times it can be broken before it becomes useless. But who would know? This would have been much easier with Potter. All those years, wasted! Those kids will pay, eventually. No use doing something now when I can devastate their lives later...' Dumbledore thought as he grabbed a Lemon Drop out of his desk drawer. Sucking on the sour he began to watch his many silver twirling devices in silence, unaware of his phoenix shaking its head behind him.

[illegible]

It was in a dark circular room that we find Severus Snape. Dressed in ceremonial garb, he sat on his legs looking forward but not seeing anything. He was preparing. He was extremely wary about his master's 'gift'. Anything that came from that man could not be good. The pentagram that he sat in now had been drawn by his lord for his personal use, no one had ever used these ritual chambers besides the master. It made him all the more wary. He searched through his mind to find what he was looking for. After a moment, he found them, the switches he had mentally created to signify pain and pleasure. Generally he kept both of them on half, but tonight he would be turning the pain off for the ritual. He could not appear weak in front of his Lord by screaming out. His master had begun to prepare for the ritual almost immediately after their meeting, but it had taken him nearly two days to set up. For his lord to go through all this trouble for him was beyond anything he had ever heard. He had been allowed to leave for his home for a half an hour to find two things of extreme personal importance, something that had confused him greatly.

A near silent creaking was heard behind him. After a moment Lord Voldemort appeared in front of him, floating two bodies behind him. The bodies were revived and a man and a woman began to yell uselessly.

“Severus, I see that you are ready. The ritual that you are about to perform, or take part in, I should say, is one that I have done many times myself. The man before you, if you did not recognize him is Karkaroff. He was found early yesterday morning. The woman before you is Nevue Shey, a spy that was found out recently. You are going

to kill them both, one before the other. I will do the rest. Are you ready Severus?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Of course you are... pick up your first object." The Dark Lord Commanded. Snape reached into his robe and pulled the Prince family ring. "Kill one when I tell you to." Severus nodded.

The Dark Lord walked over to the two floating people and poured a vile looking potion on the two of them, making a bubbling noise as it hit their skin and began to chant in a harsh tongue, something that may have hurt Severus' ears if he could have felt pain at the moment. He recognized a few Druidic words like 'break' and 'bind' as well as 'power' mixed with a few serpentine hisses. The flames in the corner of the room stopped shinning their reddish yellow flame and turned a cold black. The room got increasingly colder, as if a dementor was near.

"Hold the ring forward and kill." He was commanded, and he obeyed.

"Avada Kedavra!" He intoned. That familiar emerald green light of screaming death burst forth from his wand and struck the former Durmstrang Headmaster in the head. The man's body was thrown back and into the wall, a broken heap, but not from the spell. A light purple ball of mist had shot out of the man, and was now heading towards the potions master. At the same time, Snape felt something inside himself break and struggle to get out. It succeeded and a dark grey mist pushed out of his body. The mist had a face, his face. The face bowed to him before it shot into the ring just as the light purple ball hit him in the chest. The slightly worn and hollow feeling that he felt momentarily was wiped away, a feeling of rejuvenation began to seep its way through his entire body. He had not felt this good in years. Something this good could not possibly be bad. He allowed a small smile to play across his face for a moment before he stopped and looked towards his lord. Riddle smirked at him, knowing exactly what he was feeling.

Again, the chanting continued. The flames got darker, colder, and showed less light. The pentagram began to glow in an eerie light. The

woman began to scream with renewed vigor, though it was futile. Again, he cast the killing curse when he was commanded to. The spy soon joined the other traitor next to the wall as a blue and slightly rainbow colored ball of mist left her. That same feeling of something trying to get out was felt by Snape as another dark grey cloud left his chest and went into an object. This time it was his mother's favorite necklace, one of the few things that he had left from her and one of the only things in his life he felt even remotely sentimental about. The necklace glowed black as it absorbed the grey misty matter and seemed to lose its luster. The bluish light hit him in the chest and he once again felt that feeling of refreshment. This time though, there was something else. Power. As his master continued to chant the feeling became more and more noticeable. He realized that he had absorbed both of their magical cores and now they were being bonded to his own. His lord had been right. He could never have dreamed of such power, and yet he knew that Voldemort was even more powerful and he began to respect the man more.

"Rise Severus. Tonight, you have joined the leagues of countless other Dark Lords in history who have performed this ritual. You hold in your hands two pieces of your soul. Your soul is now in three parts, one of the magical numbers. For every piece that you lost, you gained another magical core. I think that you would agree that it is a fair trade. Should you be killed, you will be able to be revived, not unlike I was. You will find that your appearance has changed slightly, you are a bit paler, thinner, and your eyes are darker, almost glowing black. Do not draw attention to this, and if the old fool asks about it, tell him it was during a potions explosion. You are the most powerful of my followers now and may call me 'sir' if you so desire."

"Yes, sir." Severus said, reveling in the power he now felt.

"Good. In a week I want you to take the inner circle and raid Azkaban. If possible, take the fortress under your control, if not, free all of my supporters and kill those who won't or are too far gone to join me." He commanded. Riddle opened his palm as if to receive something and Snape's necklace glided into his hands.

"I will be keeping this. It will ensure that it is never destroyed for any reason." 'And to ensure your loyalty.' Voldemort thought to himself.

Snape nodded weakly knowing that he could not go against his lord. "You are dismissed." He told his servant. Snape bowed low and left. He locked the door and put up a silencing ward and laughed. A high pitched laugh so disturbing and plainly evil in nature that it would give anyone alive who heard it nightmares, and had on occasion. Instead it cracked the skin of the two dead people lying in a heap near the wall.

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All right, that is the end of this chapter. The training starts next chapter and hopefully things may start to speed up, though no promises there Hope you all enjoyed Snape's ritual. Neville, Narcissa, Draco get some play in the next chapter, or at least that's what I'm planning on.

I want to address something; this story will not contain slash. There may be more pairing between characters, but they won't be slash. Seraph may or may not have a relationship somewhere down the road in the story. As of now, it's a not. When he gets back to Hogwarts, if he goes back to Hogwarts, we will see. I've got nothing against slash, I just don't enjoy reading it when it is between main characters. I'm not sure how well I can write het pairings, let alone slash. Sorry for those of you who wanted a Harry/Draco fic.

I will take suggestions as to who Seraph should be with if I decide to do a pairing with him.

I'm also looking for rituals. Any and all, whether a vague idea or details including instructions and ingredients. I need help here. I can only come up with so many.

I want to know who should be in the guild once it starts up. Let me explain how I planned on doing this. There is a calling that runs in their blood when the guild will be started up again. They may not know it, their parents may not have known about the guild. Some of the purebloods may, but not likely. May be muggleborn to pureblood. Draco and Tonks are automatic as they Black blood. It is only in their generation, so there won't be any older members (older as in not

parents old) People like Remus, Fred, George and others may be recruited outside of the blood call. There probably won't be more than 10-15 blood called members. All others will be recruited. So tell me who you want.

Remember to review.

Last Time...

"Good. In a week I want you to take the inner circle and raid Azkaban. If possible, take the fortress under your control, if not, free all of my supporters and kill those who won't or are too far gone to join me." He commanded. Riddle opened his palm as if to receive something and Snape's necklace glided into his hands.

"I will be keeping this. It will ensure that it is never destroyed for any reason." 'And to ensure your loyalty.' Voldemort thought to himself. Snape nodded weakly knowing that he could not go against his lord. "You are dismissed." He told his servant. Snape bowed low and left. He locked the door and put up a silencing ward and laughed. A high pitched laugh so disturbing and plainly evil in nature that it would give anyone alive who heard it nightmares, and had on occasion. Instead it cracked the skin of the two dead people lying in a heap near the wall.

## Chapter 14: Go

"What du ya want?" Seraph asked groggily. Being woken up by excitable house elves was not something he wanted to happen on a regular basis.

"Master Sereaph wanted us to wake him up early for his training." Winky said in a hesitant voice, as if she expected him to punish her at any moment. Seraph groaned. He hated mornings. Late nights he could deal with, tiredness could be battled with the right state of mind, and pepper up potion. He thanked Winky and told her he wanted breakfast in 15 minutes. She left with a snap of her fingers and he got dressed. Fifteen minutes later found Seraph enjoying a rather large breakfast that had him more awake then he could remember. Whatever Winky was doing to the food was a good thing. After breakfast he sat and wondered what he should do first. He needed a plan, what to do when, and hopefully he could stick to it. Whatever he drew up though, there were two things that he needed to learn first. Occlumency and Legilimencey as well as the Animagus transformation.

After he gained proficient skill in the art of Occlumency then he could begin everything else. The Animagus potion might take nearly three days to brew, but it would not be extremely difficult to make. At least not for him. He was confident in the potions affinity he had been given. Once he took the Animagus potion, he would prepare for his first ritual. His schedule went something like this:

6:00 a.m. – 6:15 a.m. Wake up/Breakfast  
6:15 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Running/Weight Training  
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Occlumency/Legilimencey  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Ritual Study  
12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch  
12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Potion Study/ Transfiguration (Conjuration, animation)/Charms  
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Rune/Language study  
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Creation  
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Weapons Training/Stealth Training  
8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Gift Training

Setting the schedule aside, he went in search of Cheleb and took him into the quidditch pitch. The grim was content to play with the brooms -his brooms- again, but chased after Seraph after he saw that he was running. Seraph had always known that he was malnourished, and therefore a bit on the less healthy side, but by the way he was always able to evade Dudders, well more precisely Dud's fists, you could tell that he was in better shape than some. Going to Hogwarts seemed to make him lose his unnatural speed and stamina, though he retained his reflexes, it seemed to him as he began wheezing on his second lap around the pitch in a dead sprint. When an hour had passed he had sprinted three laps and jogged two more, nothing to scoff at, but he knew he needed to be better. No matter how fast he ran, he saw someone running faster, longer, and with more ease than himself. And it pissed him off. So he ran, and ran, until he could barely maintain a walk.

The weight equipment had been placed on a section where stands had been and now stood towards the pitch. He made it there soaking wet and out of breath. Dobby popped into existence and gave him a water to drink. Well more than water, but he did not know what it was. He thanked the elf and felt very refreshed. The book had told him

good techniques to use and which machines to use and when. He knew that in a few weeks he would have to change up his workout schedule so that his muscles did not get used to the workout along with what stretches to do. He began with the bench press with Dobby as his spotter, then some back machines, free weights and finally leg machines. Like with his running, he saw people better. They lifted more, faster, easier. And it really pissed him off. He threw his anger into the weights, his pain was theirs, his triumph was their struggle. He limped out of the pitch and collapsed in the hallway, barely able to stand. Dobby once again gave him something to drink and he felt better. What ever they were giving him was really helping.

Ten minutes later he felt refreshed with minimal stiffness. He knew that the people he saw weren't real, just part of his mind. Figments of an imagination forced to deal with never being good enough for his caretakers. But he was grateful for them now. They pushed him, and he realized that they always had. And now he was going to push back. He smirked as he decided to call the pitch the 'Ghost Room' as long as he lived there.

Once again he found himself inside his trunk searching for a book. This time 'Black's Guide to Mind Shrouding and Infiltration: Occlumency and Legilimencey' Stepping out of the trunk he found a nice chair in his study and began reading.

Occlumency is the art of protecting ones mind from the art of Legilimencey, the art of intruding a mind. To learn on is to learn the other, the master level of the arts is not to make sure one cannot read your thoughts or read others, but to protect your thoughts in such a way that the intruder believes that they were successful or retrieve information without alerting the other party and being able to distinguish what is real and what is not. If you are reading this book then you are not only a Black, but a grim speaker. The knowledge of the guild is of the utmost secrecy. Make sure that it stays that way.

The first step in protecting your mind is to order your mind. You must know it better then anyone; it is your mind after all. Each system is unique to the individual. I'm dead by the time you are reading this, so telling my technique will not hurt anything. I use the stars. Every constellation makes up a subject, whether knowledge, emotions, or



other random memories. Each star is a sub group, specific knowledge and emotions and memories. Inside each star there are more and more sub groups until the space is filled up. The space is in your mind, which is only limited by how much space you think is there, so think of it as infinite.

To be able to order your mind you must be in a state of deep relaxation, able to go into a trance so to speak. The easiest way is to concentrate on finding your core. Breathe in and out, thinking only of your magic. What it feels like, what your wand feels like, the ebb and flow of powerful casting. Follow that feeling. If you can follow it far enough, you will reach your core. Core size varies, as does its shape. Some may be perfectly round, but most are not. The shape of the core does not matter, but the size does. The larger the core, the more magic can be held in it. There are ways to increase your core size, by ritual (which I cover in one of my many Ritual books), as well as naturally, though the initial ritual must be done first (I suppose that means that it is not natural then, but it is something you are doing after the ritual, you just need the push to be able to do it on your own). It is at this point if you are looking for your Animagus form it will become apparent to you. Depending on how connected your animal is to you, you may see it in the core or like me, it may be outside the core, like a guardian. Once there you will notice lines connecting your magical core to various things, your arms, legs, the most should be concentrated between your arms and your mind. These pathways can be manipulated like the core can after the ritual to increase the amount of magic able to get to a body part at a time, as well as creating new pathways. Newly created pathways will be very painful, but the benefits outweigh the minor discomfort. But I digress. Follow the pathway to your mind.

Remember how it looks, as we will be changing it. The visual representation of your mind will show you how open to attack you are. Once your mind is properly ordered, we will begin the protection. You will find that your mind will be disordered, but connected. You must go through each and every memory and categorize them. How, as I have said before, it is up to you, but it must be done. The benefits of a well organized mind are enormous. Retain information better and be able to recall things from a specific memory, as if you had just learned it. You will be able to keep your emotions in check and

possible learn how to turn off pain. That is something dangerous and should never be fully turned off. Dulled pain is useful in battle, but not being able to feel a spear in you will dampen your life expectancy. I must stress the danger of an unorganized mind, as well as the danger of an unprotected organized mind. Frequent and brutal attacks may reduce your natural resistance. This is an art form, no matter the use, there is a certain form that must be followed or you are doomed to failure. Do not believe yourself better than you are. People who are more magically powered have a higher natural defense, and therefore are naturally better in protecting their minds.

Once you have organized your mind, you are ready to begin the next step; protection. The original masters of the arts, the brothers Occlumens and Legilimens intended it to be a way to communicate without speaking. When it was discovered that one could find information, it became a favorite tool of interrogators and thieves. The brothers got together again and discovered a way to block the mind intrusion. The first mind shields were crude, nothing more than tall walls. The Legilimens had to get stronger to find the same information that was easily reachable before. Walls became castles and Legilimens would lay siege. Castles became taller, stronger, with moats and other obstacles to get in the way. Guardians were posted to help get rid of unwanted attackers and the magic 'will' to push intruders out of the mind was discovered. Legilimens became stronger, but also more subtle, slipping in quietly and quickly to reach what they desired. False memories were created, and attackers learned how to distinguish. Many have incorporated the art of 'Warding' into their minds and can be alerted to any presence not their own in their mind. As time progressed, some gave up the castle method for simple spheres with many layers, gaining better protection, but losing their guardians. The arts have not progressed any further since then. Castles, guards, spheres and will. Or that is what any book will tell you.

I am a master of shadows. Why would I want to build a gigantic castle or a floating ball? Why let them know exactly where to go? Why let them see at all? No castles, no guards, no spheres. Shadow. What an attacker cannot see, he cannot find. Order your mind and cast it in shadow. The stars that I have ordered my mind into are high above the shadow, but still invisible to any attackers. It is this technique, 'Mind Shrouding' for which I named this book. Intruders can be let in,

and with nothing to stop them, they will believe you vulnerable. They will wonder around aimlessly until they realize that they cannot find anything and give up. While they are on their futile mission, you can be searching through their minds. While the process of protecting your mind may be difficult, this method makes it very easy. Once you have completed these steps, refer back to the book on Legilimency. You may be surprised at how easy it is to find information once you have navigated your own mind and know how to look.

Seraph sat the book down and cursed Snape in his mind. The bastard had purposely taught him incorrectly. There was nothing he could do about it though, at least not at the moment. Later, he would make his life hell, but now he would just think of the many interesting ways to hurt the man. He read over the information again and sat down cross-legged on the floor leaning against the wall. He got settled and began to breathe in and out, thinking only of his magic. After nearly two hours he had almost fallen asleep with nothing to show for it. He then got his wand out and began to levitate or summon and banish things, concentrating on how the magic felt to him. He could have hit himself when after the fifth pillow he banished he felt it. It was what he felt when he first picked up his new wand. It was the comforting warmth at his finger tips but at the same time a cold and refreshing breeze that seemed to clear any weariness he had away. He set his wand down and tried to recapture that feeling. After a few minutes, he felt it in his wand hand. He made sure that he had a good grip on the feeling before going any further. Confident that he would not lose it, he followed the feeling up his arm, to his shoulders and finally his core. He had gone painfully slow as to keep the connection and it had taken nearly an hour to reach his core.

He was amazed at what he saw once he found it. It was a fairly large silver ball that seemed to project black bolts of lightning and fire. The lightning converged at some places and created black flames that licked the glowing silver ball. Silvery glowing veins seemed to connect body parts to his core like the book said, the most going to his mind and his arm. Some floated freely though, as if they should be connected but were severed at one point and never reconnected. On one side, if a sphere can have a side, there was a very large lightning bolt shaped crack that seemed to have been recently healed, though it left a deep scar.

'Must be the remnants of my link to Voldemort' Seraph thought. 'I wonder if this changes anything...'

Suddenly a booming bark could be heard. Out of nowhere a huge dog came out, back hunched and fur spiked, not unlike a cat, though this dog had no reason to try and make itself look bigger. It was a grim, quite a bit larger than Cheleb, but a grim nonetheless. More specifically it was the same grim that shared the space on his back. A huge Rot. The dog's growls sent vibrations through the air, and while Seraph was not technically standing on anything he still felt off balanced by it. The Grim's silver and green eyes flashed and he looked ready to pounce before Seraph stopped him.

"Calm your self." He told the still growling animal. The grim only smirked. Well it was more like the same feral grin that he and Cheleb had, only it was a bit more threatening. A bit, like saying that the Cruciatus curse is going to sting.

"Wondered when you would show up." It said.

"How long have you been waiting?"

"Since you chose your path. I was awoken then. Oh we are going to raise some hell." This time Seraph smirked. He liked him already.

"What will happen to you once I do the transformation?" Seraph asked.

"My magic joins your core, and I join your mind. We are the same, just separated at the moment. It is the nature of the gift. I am a grim, and you will become one. You are human, and I will become one. It's win win and all." The grim said. Seraph grinned and nodded. He bid his alter ego farewell and followed the highest concentration of veins to his mind. What he saw did not make him happy. At all. The book had mentioned one's natural defenses. Well, his lay in ruins, strewn all over the vast plain that was in his mind. The ironic part of it was that his natural mind defenses were his first prison, his cupboard. It seems that the Dursley's treatment of him went deeper than the products of his imagination. Snape had done this, but something

good may have come out of it. His mind was free from the cupboard now. He could start it over. He took a look around his mind. Stormy clouds hung overhead with silver and green bolts of lightning that flashed before a tremendous booming sound. The rain was torrential, but refreshing. To the casual observer one would think that the scene was depressing, but it was not to him. When he was little, he always enjoyed the huge thunderstorms. They scared Dudley shitless for one reason, but for another, it refreshed everything. They were a source of comfort, not fear. It did not surprise him that his mindscape resembled the worst storm that he had ever seen.

He found his thoughts and memories floating aimlessly about, sometimes bumping into each other, seemingly connected but not at the same time. This would take a while. As his natural defense was a cupboard, his memories naturally took the shape of cleaning products and tools. That was the first thing that had to change. As he looked through each memory he changed them into little silver balls. The first sorting was very basic, memories and emotions. He had no idea how long it took to do it but he was able to place his memories in one pile and emotions in another pile. He soon discovered that every memory was attached to an emotion, which was inconvenient in the process of properly sorting them. He knew that he needed to categorize his emotions so that he could use them when casting spells, so he could not leave them attached. So he took a bit of the emotion and stuck it to the memory, leaving an imprint of the emotion on it. The emotion was just as strong within the memory, but now the emotion that fueled it was being kept somewhere else. He had just finished that when he was disturbed.

“Master Sereaph, sir. You needs to eat.” Winky told him in a stern tone quiet unlike her usual bashful self.

“Yeah sure, I could eat.” Seraph said a bit taken aback from the diminutive house elf acting like Molly Weasley. “What time is it anyway?” He asked.

“It is being 8:00 p.m., Master Sereaph. Yous has been sitting there for a long time. I wanted to make you eat lunch, but Dobby said that you was busy. You were projecting your aura earlier, it broke that wall, I think.” Winky informed him. So he had been at it for what? Ten

hours? And he just managed to sort out memories from emotions. Seraph sighed; this would take a while longer. He ate the full meal that Winky had made for him and pulled out the book on Animagi he had gotten.

The book was very basic, no more or less than was needed; instructions and the potion instructions. There was also a warning that while owning the in the time of its creation was not illegal, a friend had told him it would be in years to come, so if you were following the guide, it was the user's fault if they were caught. All you had to do was find your animal, if you had one. Most wizards and witches past a certain level of power (not very much) had an animal or a 'totem' that represented part of their personality or heritage. When a transformation took place, you gained a bit of the animal, a bird Animagus reported having better eyesight, a cat Animagus gained some of its grace, a dog Animagus usually gained a barking laugh and growled when angered. Sometimes personality traits were gained, a Hippogriff Animagus reported to become much more proud. You found your animal by looking into your core. He already had and knew now for sure what it was, so he read on. Next you had to brew the potion. It would take nearly a day and a half to brew, but you only had to stir every eight hours or so and add an ingredient before stirring, so it was not extremely difficult. The ingredients were harder to get than the making, well that was true if you did not know where to go anyway. Once the potion had to be taken within thirty seconds after the brewing time had been finished for the maximum effect. Maximum effect just meant less painful, not any less effective, which is why you could buy ready-made potions. Three drops of blood had to be added by the user right before drinking. The user would slip into a trance (if it was brewed correctly) and be forced to transform. Once they had initially transformed, it would become less painful and easier to accomplish until it became second nature. He would begin the potion tomorrow while he was sorting his mind. He would make sure that Dobby or Winky would warn him before he had to stir or add something. He put the small book down and crashed into his bed.

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Neville Longbottom was slightly confused. He had just received a letter from the Headmaster inviting his grandmother and himself to stay at a safe house. His grandmother had received a letter as well, asking if it would be okay for him to stay with some friends for the rest of the summer, and she was welcome, but not required, to stay as well. The Longbottom Matriarch was a little apprehensive; she had not spoken to Albus Dumbledore, on good terms, for quite a few years. She felt that he could have better protected her son and his wife. But, she would ultimately leave the decision with Neville. She was so proud of what he had done. So much like his father, though she had cuffed him quiet a few times for being such an idiot. She was proud nonetheless.

“Do you wish to stay with your friends, Neville?” She asked.

“I don’t know. I wasn’t really friends with them, just Harry and Luna, maybe Ginny too. Ron and Hermione were kind of indifferent towards me. They betrayed him, I know it. I don’t want any part of them. I just can’t believe that he’s gone. He lives through everything life can throw at him and he trips up on crossing the street. Its’ not right, and it’s not fair.” Neville said strongly, shocking his grandmother

“I will go though, if nothing more then so I can know what is going on. Hopefully I can work at the Weasley twin’s new shop and not have to deal too much with them.” He informed his grandmother.

“Very well. I won’t be joining you though. Someone needs to keep up with the garden and I feel confident in our wards. They were set up by your great-great grandfather and Theodore Potter you know. Two more powerful warders you could not find in that age. When will you want to leave?”

“Soon, I’ll get my stuff together and leave. The Headmaster’s letter is a portkey that will take me when I say the password.”

“I want to see you before you go, Neville. There is something that I want to give you.” Neville nodded and left to get his trunk together. Half an hour later he was ready to go.

“Gram?” He called out.

“In here, Neville.” His grandmother called from the sitting room.

“You are growing up so fast, Neville. You look so much like your father. You’ve made me very proud, and I think that it is time that you received your birthright.” Neville had blushed under the rare praise from his grandmother but became confused as she continued. “Do you know the history of the Longbottom’s?”

“I know that we’ve always been Herboligists, it’s a natural gift for us. Some have also been potions masters as well, but none in the last three generations. Father was the first Auror in the family. Our motto comes out to mean something about retribution against those who wrong us and loyalty to blood and clan. The family symbol is a sword covered in Devil’s Snare. That’s about it.” Neville finished a bit less certain than he had started.

“Yes, but there is more. Had your father been alive he would be the one to tell you. It is true that the majority of our family has always been Herboligists, but it is more than that. The first Longbottom gained his name from growing a perfect long bottomed leaf that was used for smoking. His father did not have the name; we’re not sure what his father’s name was actually. The green thumb gift was imparted into our blood by the Guild. The part of our motto does not mean clan, but guild. We no longer remember the actual name of the Guild, but we know that they were a thieves and assassin’s guild that did some mercenary work. They also had a thirst for knowledge and creation. They created many of the illegal rituals that are in existence today as well as developing many spells and stealth gifts. We Longbottoms created many plants and special ingredients for the guild. It is one of the reasons we have so much wealth.” She explained slowly.

Neville was a bit shocked at the revelation. Of all the things that his grandmother could have told him, that would not have even entered into his mind. He nodded slowly, processing the fact that his ancestors had been Herboligist mercenaries. It wasn’t too far a stretch, he supposed, it was the Dark Ages after all, but it was odd to know that your blood was the way it was because of a ritual done to the first of your line.



"I am telling you this so that if you ever feel the blood call, you will know what it means."

"And what does it mean?"

"That the guild has been reinstated, the blood pact your ancestor agreed to is being tested, and that you are being called in. It has been over two thousand years since the last calling, and the guild was disbanded several years later, but should you feel the call, you will have to go. Your blood demands no less." Neville nodded. "I also wanted to give you this. I feel that it is time you were given you chance to make your mark upon the world." The old lady reached into her sleeve and pulled out a small dark green box and handed it to Neville. He hesitated for a moment, but finally opened the box. It was a ring. The ring, the families ring. His head shifted to hers sharply, making a popping noise.

"Yes?" Neville asked.

"Yes." Mrs. Longbottom assured. Neville hugged his grandmother strongly, which she returned in a rare show of emotion. "Once you put that on you will become the Head of the Longbottom family. You will become a legal adult in the eyes of the Ministry, all the rights and responsibilities, you know the rest. You are also able to perform magic now legally. If you wish, you can live wherever you want to, though I would suggest somewhere heavily warded. There are a few properties you can stay at if you want."

"Thanks Gram. I'll be careful, I promise." He told her.

"And be sure to buy a wand soon. And keep in mind Ollivander's is not the only place to go." She told him cryptically. He took the ring out of the box and placed it on his finger. The ring glowed and he felt something slip and break inside of him as the ring resized itself to him before the emerald Devil's Snare seemed to tighten around the onyx sword more closely and the sword gained a much sharper look. Neville nodded and said the password and disappeared from Longbottom Manor.

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“Neville! How are you?” Hermione asked loudly, drawing the attention of the room.

“Not bad.” He said slowly.

“Hey mate, good to see you.” Ron said excitedly. Neville looked at him oddly but responded in kind, trying to figure out exactly what was going on.

“Hi, Neville.” Ginny said somberly, not looking up from the place on the wall she was staring at.

“So, you staying for the summer?” Ron asked.

“Yeah, I thought that I should. Keep up with what’s going on and all...” He trailed off as Ginny sniffed loudly.

“Don’t mind her; she’s just sad about something.” Ron said as he walked towards his chess set. Neville could not believe this.

“Come on Neville, I’ll show you to your room.” Ginny said as she finally moved. He was taken to a small but very nice room with a window that overlooked the street below.

“They make me sick, you know.” Ginny said suddenly.

“No, I don’t.” Neville said, having an idea of what she was talking about.

“They practically killed him themselves. All they had to do was bring him in. But no, my brother had to be an idiot and pick a fight. Everything would have worked out, and I would have my Harry right now. It’s all their fault, Ron and Dumbledore’s...” She trailed off, still looking at the wall and walked out of the room. ‘What the hell is going on here?’ He thought to himself. He stayed in the room for a few minutes and decided that he could brave them for a little while. He got into a chess match with Ron but could not concentrate and had

the most spectacular loss he could remember. He ran into the Weasley twins a few hours later and cornered them.

“Oy, Fred, it’s our favorite Guinea Pig.” George told his brother.

“Looks like it.” Fred responded.

“Now what exactly-”

“Does it want?”

“A job.” Neville told them simply.

“A job? Your loaded aint you?”

“What do you need a job for?”

“I don’t think that I can stay here all the time, just can’t.” Neville said.

“If our company is that bad-” George started.

“You should try working somewhere else.” Fred finished.

“Not your company I want to avoid.” Neville told them softly. Fred and George shared a look. They each took an arm and dragged him into an empty room.

“Step into our office, Neville. Now specifically, whose company would you rather avoid?” Fred asked.

“Some of the star Order members, or our dear siblings and our resident bookworm?” George asked.

“The latter.” Neville said softly, hoping that they would not get mad and claim retribution.

“My, my. I think that we can help you out here Nev. George, get Remus and Tonks. I think it was about time we had that meeting with our benefactor.” George nodded and went to find the aforementioned people.

“Have you spoken to the Headmaster yet, Nev?” Fred asked.

“No, why?”

“Probably better if we got to you before he does. Remus and Tonks will explain. We might even be able to meet a special guest in a couple of days.

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Seraph was once again woken up by a bouncing Dobby on his bed. He groaned and got up, wondering why wizards did not have alarm clocks and vowed to find the equivalent. A few minutes later he was dressed for his workout and began eating the wonderful breakfast that Winky had prepared. Cheleb joined him in his run for a little while before becoming bored and playing with his broomsticks. He was right beside him, running, again. Seraph looked up and saw him run right passed.

‘Come on, can’t do any better then that?’ It taunted. Seraph huffed and ran faster. His legs were stiff, his heart pounded, and his forehead burned. But he did not feel any of that. He saw the ghost running in front of him, just in front of him, egging him on, and he ran faster, if nothing more then to beat the shit out of the ghost. He sprinted a few miles and jogged the last few laps until he practically collapsed and was forced to stop by Dobby. The elf looked at him worriedly and gave him two glasses of water. After he caught his breath he thanked Dobby and stretched again and started on the weight machines, making sure he did not work the same muscles he had worked the day before. The ghost was here too, just as bad as the day before. Always stronger, always more rested, and always, always talking. When he was done with his workout not even Dobby’s water could get rid of the stiffness in his arms and chest.

He found the soap taps for the bathtub/pond. The soap and hot water actually fell and mixed with the water below from the waterfall. He swam around for a while, trying to work out the stiffness in his body in the hot water. He soon left the pond and found one of the potions

rooms. He took out the Animagus kit and laid the ingredients and included instructions. Instructions that clashed with the ones that he was given from Gryffindor's guide. He felt slightly dizzy when comparing the two and realized that the newer potion would be much more painful and not allow the animal to give many of its traits or abilities. The Ministry must have gotten rid of the majority of correct potion directions and put out this one. If you can't get rid of a problem, modify it. It would take less time the correct way too, almost two weeks of time actually. Seraph shook his head in disgust and began boiling the water that Dobby provided him.

One ounce finely chopped Bellsprout to be stirred in clockwise. One stir for each pinch. Add powdered Ginger, but do not stir. Let boil exactly eight hours. Potion should be opaque.

Essence of Nordok to be mixed on slowly as potion moves in a counterclockwise motion from three anticlockwise motions. Add Gamie hair and Muttled Doneover spleen (chopped) to potion and let simmer for eight hours. Potion will boil loudly once and turn a muddy brown.

Powdered Griffin tooth to be dusted along top of potion as Crime Tongue is added whole to potion. Stir three times anticlockwise and tap the side of the cauldron once with a golden spoon. A sharp ringing tone will be heard and the potion will turn an acid green. Let lightly simmer for seven hours.

Turn heat off and place potion in a silver goblet. Drip three drops of blood and gently swirl. Drink immediately and focus on your animal. If you have not found your animal, you will find it now. Just in a more painful way.

He began the potion and told Dobby to rouse him before it was time to do the next step. He sat with his back to the wall in the same place he had the day before, the wall had cracked in a way to hold him there once he sat down. Delving into his core again and quickly followed the veins to his mind. It was much easier this time, he noted. He decided to completely categorize his emotions first. He liked the idea of using his memories and emotions as stars and constellations, so he did it that way.

The constellation to hold his emotions would be Boötes, the Bear Guard. He separated the emotions by the strongest; anger, sadness, fear, shame, happiness, hatred, and love. There were many more, but they were felt to a less extent and would be placed in a miscellaneous star. He would sort the pile and then put them into a larger star once he had finished sorting them. As he went through anger, he found that they felt colder the more powerful it was. He recognized the feelings from when he was stuck at the Dursley's and during potions classes.

Hatred was next, and it felt ice cold. So much so that it scared him slightly. These were feelings associated with Voldemort and Bellatrix. The sadness he felt was deep and tormented and he wanted to stop from the pain. The fear that he went through next was blinding, as it seemed to come from nowhere, but he managed to sort it too. Shame made him feel worthless and he got through them quickly. He was glad that he had finished happiness for last. He was not sure what caused the emotions, but he had never felt better. Love was a strong emotion, but there was too little of it and he placed it with the other lesser emotions in one star.

Once all the emotions had been sorted out, he concentrated on large bottomless silver balls, his stars, and placed the emotions carefully inside, the lesser of a category first, finishing with the strongest. After he completed that, he gathered them all together and floated up to the sky, past the rain and the clouds, past everything. He was not sure how he did it, but it was his mind, so he could do what he wanted. He arranged the balls in the correct formation and left them floating there. Once back on the 'ground' he willed the clouds to lessen and the sky to darken as he made the large silver balls hanging suspended in the air shine with an inner silvery glow. Satisfied for now, he was getting ready to exit his mind when he was shaken by Dobby.

"Master Sareaph must be tending his potion now." Dobby informed him.

"Thanks Dobby. Tell me, have you ever known a house elf to take an Animagus potion?" Seraph asked as he began adding the next ingredient and stirring. Dobby's face paled.

"No's master sir. No house elf would steal his master's potion!" Dobby said, almost sounding insulted.

"What if they were made to drink it, would it work the same? Would it hurt them?" Seraph asked. Perhaps he had a bit of his ancestor in him, the need to tinker with the unknown. What would a house elf turn into anyway?

"I don't know, Master Sareaph. None of the ingredients is poisoness to us, so I suppose it would work." Dobby said uncertainly.

"I'll have some extra when I'm finished making this, it will be painful, but you can take some with me when I'm finished. Winky too, if she wants." Dobby seemed to think about it for a moment before he nodded.

"I will try it, Master Sareaph, if you says it is okay for me too. I will ask Winky if she wants to as well." Dobby said and popped out. 'This will certainly be interesting.' He thought. He felt something deep inside him give out a bark like laugh before he was made to eat a small lunch to appease Winky, who had decided that she wanted no part with the potion. Once he finished eating his lunch/dinner he sat down again to sort his memories.

The constellations that he wanted to hold his memories would be Orion and his hounds, canis minor and canis major. The memories were separated by categories and sub categories, then more and more sub categories. The first 11 years of his life were separated by year, then by knowledge, experience, etc until everything from that time had a place and an order. The emotions that were imprinted were just as strong as the actual emotions and he felt physically sick by the time Dobby shook him out of his trance to tend the potion again. Dobby gave him some more of his special water and he felt better. He went to the potion and sprinkled the Griffin tooth over the top of the potion and dropped the tongue into the center. He stirred three times and hit the side of the cauldron with the required spoon.

The sharp noise that was desired rang out and the potion turned into a bright acid green concoction. Winky provided another meal for him and he felt refreshed and very full. He found that while sorting his memories and emotions was tiring, being in his mind and core seemed to give him more energy; he figured this was what was wanted in meditation. He could actually do this instead of sleep and feel fine, which is what he planned to do as he needed to take the potion in seven hours.

He once again found himself inside his mind. The memories past his 11th birthday would be separated by knowledge and experiences as well as other categories but in a more acute range, Knowledge would be distributed in the stars of Orion and the same would be done with the others with the Canis Minor and Canis Major. Knowledge was separated by subject, sometimes lesson, spell, use, incantation, ingredient, rune, number, etc. Everything that he had ever learned inside and outside of Hogwarts was in here. As he sorted through everything it was as if he was learning it over again, and he was surprised at how much he had learned but had not paid attention to. One such thing was an alarm charm. You simply did a wand movement and concentrated on what time you wanted to wake up. The wand would vibrate or sound when the time was up. The knowledge was placed in the large stars and placed in their correct positions. He concentrated and the stars lit up. He managed to go through a small bit of his first year when he was woken up by Dobby.

"It's time." Was all the elf said seriously. Seraph nodded and went to the potion. It was simmering lightly and he turned the heat off and poured the potion in to two silver goblets that Dobby had found. Dobby handed him a small silver knife, holding one himself. Seraph cut his finger and watched as the specified amount of blood dripped into the goblet and the elf did the same.

"Cheers." Seraph said in toast before he down the potion. It wasn't that bad tasting actually. Maybe it was because he brewed it and not Snape, or tongue overpowered the other ingredients taste wise. He concentrated on the animal that he had seen by his core and let the potion go to work. The first thing that he noticed was that he did not feel a lot of discomfort. The second was that the hair on his head was getting shorter while the hair on his arms was getting longer. And



darker. And thicker, and there was more of it. He fell to his knees as his legs gave out on him and let out a muffled growlish yell as he hit his face on the ground. Only his face was in the process of becoming a muzzle. The arms that he was using to support himself once he fell gave out on him too and he lay on his stomach as he watched them shorten and change colour.

He wasn't too sure where his clothes or his wand had gone to but he was now naked and completely covered with short fur. He felt his back muscles enlarge and tighten, his now four legs flex taught. They felt like they were coiled, just waiting to pounce on something. A nubby little tail sprouted behind him and he felt it wag in anticipation. His ears lengthened and he noticed he could hear the bones in his body snapping and reshaping, organs being moved to different locations, and Dobby's transformation. His teeth reshaped themselves and began to lengthen and become dangerously sharp. His tongue lengthened and it lolled out of his mouth before he could catch it but left it there for a moment as he panted. He shook his head suddenly and his ears flopped around. Though he could not see it, but the silver markings around his paws and muzzle were glowing silver in the felt movement within himself that was not physical. The grim by his core barked in joy as it joined his mind and magic joined his core. He gave a very frightening smirk, as the two minds joined together.

He knew why the grims were created now. He knew how they were created, and it made more sense to him now why he felt like a predator and why Cheleb always looked like a cat ready to pounce when he felt threatened or was trying to protect him. Grims were magically bred and enhanced animals. They wanted a strong, stealthy, and protective animal that could think for itself. The Black Panther, Kodiak bear, and large breed dogs were bred through rituals. Once the desired animal was created, they enhanced them. They were given a slight scanning ability, greater endurance, strength and speed as well as making them smarter. The final ritual allowed them to shadow walk, but something went wrong, and grims were forced to stay partially in the shadow realm. They found this to be blessing in disguise as it increased just about everything in the grims. Grimtongue was developed and they became the perfect companions for the Guild. The first Black was the only person able to transform

into a grim through blood rituals. Many others tried the same thing but failed, ending up turning into large black dogs instead. Through the years their successors were able to change into more and more magical animals.

His eyes were the last thing to change. It was like the vision he got when looking for magic, but there was more. Shadow was shadow, but it wasn't dark. It was hard to describe, but he knew it was exactly as it should be. Everything had a sharp edge to it though, which reminded him of the shadow realm and he remembered that grims were in both realms at once. He noticed a few feet away there was an image of a silver and scarlet spark and a light afterimage of Dobby popping in that was slowly fading away. 'Must be what Cheleb meant when he said that you could follow the magic.' He thought.

He was glad that his sight allowed him to see colour, unlike the absolute grayscale that was the shadow realm. He feared for a moment that he would be doomed to see in shades of black and grey as a grim. He turned around and found that Dobby was finishing his own transformation. He thought it ironic that Dobby had turned into a dog as well, until he remembered Dobby saying something about the bonding changing their magic to be more like the families. The small hyperactive elf had turned into a small and hyperactive dog. He was a Miniature Pinscher of all things, a dark green, almost black, Miniature Pinscher with silver markings around his small muzzle and paws like Seraph. He let out a barking laugh as Dobby the Pinscher chased his nubby tail around. The sound startled the small dog and it yipped and ran behind a couch.

"Come out, Dobby, I won't hurt you." He reassured the frightened elf...puppy...thing.

"I can understand you, Master Seraph. You are a big doggy. Bigger than your Cheleb puppy even!" He barked in a high pitched, well, bark. 'And speak better apparently.' Seraph thought to himself.

"Why don't you go and show Winky?" Seraph suggested. Dobby nodded his head and wagged his tail happily at the thought. The dog seemed to have a look of intense concentration before Seraph

noticed a light silver and scarlet glow around him and Dobby popped with a small bark of victory and was gone.

‘Well, I didn’t know that could happen. Of course a few hours ago I did not know that elves could become Animagus. I wonder what the Ministry would say about this.’ Seraph thought to himself as he began to move towards the door. The same walking through water feeling that he had felt in the shadow realm was present now. Like the atmosphere was denser, but did not hinder movements. He reveled in the feeling and knew why Cheleb loved to run around. He gathered himself and jumped down a flight of steps to the second level. Now Cheleb may be a puppy, but he is still a large dog, easily a couple hundred pounds. Seraph was much older and his form showed it. He was a full sized grim, probably slightly larger than a bear. Had he weighed himself, he would come out to be nearly 1,200 pounds of muscle, flesh and bone. 1,200 pounds does not take a 15 foot fall very well. But Seraph did. He hit the ground with barely a depression in the thick carpet and made hardly a sound as he took another leap and landed outside of the ‘Ghost Room’. He squeezed through the large doors and growled loudly, shaking the poles at either side of the room.

Cheleb was awake instantly. He saw the other grim and tried to match the growl, but sadly, was not able to. This was his territory though. No one else was going to take what was his and his master’s. He confronted the bear sized dog and hunched his shoulders and spiked his fur, trying to match the aggressors size, but was not able to do that either.

“You looking for a fight, pup?” It asked him patronizingly. Cheleb growled and bared his teeth. The larger dog just smirked at him and Cheleb snapped his jaws a couple of times in warning. The larger dog hunched a bit and his short fur seemed to spike near his back, making him look more feral. His head was lower to the ground, ready pounce as he gave a growl that sent tremors through the soil, making loose stones jump a bit and Cheleb backed up without consciously doing so.

“Still want to fight, pup?” It asked him again. The larger dog was making him mad. He knew that he could not win in a fight, but he

wasn't going to give up. Cheleb charged and leapt into the air faster than most people would be able to see. But Seraph saw, and jumped out of the way. Cheleb landed in a roll and Seraph was on him in a flash, his huge jaws wrapped around the smaller animal's neck. Cheleb whimpered in sadness at his defeat and fear.

"We'll have to work on that. I don't want you to ever give up, but make sure that the prize is worth it. Back down when you have to. And know you can win before taking someone head on." Seraph told him. The smaller grim looked him in the eyes in confusion as he let him up.

"Why... Master Seraph! How are you a grim?" Cheleb asked in confusion.

"Animagus, ability to turn into an animal if you have enough power. I did it just a few minutes ago." He explained. He was about to continue when he felt extremely tired and collapsed, changing back into human form as he hit the ground, and this time, 1,200 pounds made a hell of a sound.

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"Has that bitch contacted you yet, Draco?" An extremely pissed off Lucius Malfoy asked his son. Well, he did not appear pissed off. He looked mildly disgruntled, but Draco knew better. Malfoy's did not show their emotions like most people and were allowed only two types of anger; irritation, which comprised of everything but the second type of anger, Rage. Draco watched as his father paced his study, muttering cursed under his breath.

"That 'bitch' is my mother, and no, she has not." Draco said. His father had barely been out of Azkaban before he had gone back to the Dark Lord to drain their coffers. He missed the week being home with his father away, hiding out in the Dark Lord's headquarters. It had been, peaceful, he supposed.

"Do not take that tone with me, boy! Crucio!" The elder Malfoy hissed. That crackling scarlet spiral associated with pain hit him directly in his chest and he fell to his knees. He had been under the curse enough

to know that his father must be much more angered than he thought. He was able to keep from screaming by biting his tongue and cheek, but that only lasted a few moments before he let out a scream, spitting blood out at the same time. The blood splattered across Lucius' silver robes.

"You worthless excuse for an heir! Expulsum!" Lucius shouted as he let up on the torture curse. The spell hit Draco in the shoulder and a bone cracked as he was sent flipping back into the wall and landed nearly upright, but fell against the wall and slide down.

"Do you think the Dark Lord will go easy on you for disrespect? Do you think that I will allow you to besmirch the name of 'Malfoy'? You will learn, boy. And as soon as I find that whore you will use what I have taught you against her." He said, glee evident in his eyes at the very thought. Draco thought that he saw his father shudder in ecstasy before he felt like he was going to get sick and looked away. Father or not, he was not going to allow him hurt his mother, and while he had fantasized sometimes about using the torture curse once or twice, using it on his mother was the last thing he would want.

"Get up." Lucius commanded. Draco did as he was asked, not with a small with amount of difficulty, looking into his father's eyes with as much hatred as he had in his soul. Draco's silver eyes flashed brightly once and Lucius smirked.

"Already learning." He said. "I think that you will take to your lessons well. Take this." He said as he threw a small box at his son who caught it despite the pain in his arm.

"As you know, I am not exactly welcomed by the Ministry in certain circles after the Attack there. One such place is Diagon Alley, and therefore Gringotts. I need to be able to access the Malfoy vault to get the funds that the Dark Lord requires. You, however, do not have such complications at the moment. That is the Malfoy Family Ring. With it you will be able to access the vault without any difficulties. You are to use a bottomless bag and transfer half of the funds into it and bring it back promptly. With that ring you become the Head of the Family and a legal adult, allowed to use magic should you need to outside of the Manor. I need not mention that I am placing more trust

in you then I have given anyone, ever. Should you fail I will kill you myself. Better yet, I will bring you to the Dark Lord so that he may kill you.” Lucius threatened.

Draco nodded and opened the box. Inside was an intricately designed silver and sapphire ring. A silver Augury stood in sharp relief against a sapphire serpent held in its talons. He looked at the ring reverently for a moment before he put it on. The silver bird opened its wings as if to take off and the serpent moved to rest on the larger bird’s neck. The blue serpent reared itself back, as if getting ready to strike anyone who came close. It glowed and it resized to fit him and the he felt the familiar feeling of a tracking ward fell off of him.

“I need to dress the part, don’t I?” He smirked at his father who agreed and sent him to change into something befitting a Malfoy Lord. Draco left for his room and gathered his trunk. He dumped out the Hogwarts robes and a few miscellaneous useless objects leaving only some advanced school books Severus had given him before the end of school that he was to study. Something called Occlumency and Legilimencey along with some dark arts books. He grabbed some robes until he filled it up and opened the second compartment and put in some more useful items, the hand of glory and his father’s invisibility cloak as well some other questionable paraphernalia.

He had been taught the basics of apparition but had not made a trip further then a few hundred yards, so he would have to take a portkey to a warded section of the bathroom in the Leaky Cauldron. Warded or not, it was always filthy as no one had cleaned it in the last fifty years since his grandfather had warded it to be used as a portkey point. The portkey, a necklace holding a stylized ‘M’ pendant was always kept next to the front door. Just passed the room that held all of the more then questionable artifacts under the floor. Draco smirked. If what his mother did pissed his father off, then he would be in a towering rage compared. He stepped into the room and pulled up the carpet, not fearing his father entering as there were numerous warning wards around the perimeter that would close the door if it was open automatically, and the fact that he had seen some random man and woman being taken to his father’s room. Draco shuddered at the implications and his stomach turned the breakfast he had eaten not too long ago.

There were a number of artifacts dating from before the Dark Ages held here. Things that would give you nightmares from hearing about. There were also numerous 'light' artifacts that the Malfoy's had collected or stolen to keep from the enemy. The original notes on the Fidelius Charm with 'Potter' emblazoned on the top as well as a large cup that held the Hufflepuff crest on it was a couple of things being held like that. There were things that the Dark Lord himself had ordered his father to keep, like that diary that Potter had destroyed and some notes on soul magic. He grabbed it all and put it in the one full sized room that was in his trunk. Once the cellar was cleaned out, he used the special feature on the side and shrunk and pocketed it. He made it to the Grand Entranceway without incident and grabbed the portkey.

'There are plenty of other properties I can stay at. As the Head I can take him out of the wards and he won't be able to get me. I have to find mother.' He thought as he placed the necklace around his neck. 'Most Merlin damned Gryffindorish thing I've ever done.' He cursed himself as he said the activation phrase.

"Cauldron."

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Fred and George had pulled through and Dumbledore had allowed Neville to work part time at their shop. Neville scoffed at that. The Headmaster had allowed him to leave the house for a few hours a day to work. The twins knew that he was now the Head of his family but they had not proclaimed it to anyone and Dumbledore had not noticed. He had spoken with the twins and Remus and this crazy lady named Tonks that he thought he recognized from the Ministry battle, as well as the real Mad-eye Moody. They explained what had transpired the last few weeks and they made him sick. While his grandmother had always said she had her reasons for not trusting Dumbledore, he had always respected, nay, admired the man. To find out that he was invited to be befriended by Ron and Hermione and become the Headmaster's new 'tool' as Moody had put it. They were members of the Order and knew that Dumbledore wanted to

have him trained up a bit, as well as some other plans that no one knew about. He gained a new disgust when he was told of Ron and Hermione's part in Harry's death in detail.

The usual meek boy seemed to gain a confidence in his demeanor as he thought of what he would like to do to the two. Just, anger, and his brown eyes flashed a lighter shade, making them look like dark fire for a moment, before he was told to calm down. That helped, not. He did calm down considerably, though his confusion rose greatly in response as he took in the implications of Professor Remus' words. Harry may not be dead after all? But everyone else seemed to think otherwise, the Headmaster included. He was told that they were going to meet up with a mutual friend to see about it as soon as possible, hopefully parallel to the time he would be working.

Today was that day; he was supposed to be working for about four hours. Instead they would head to the contact; he was not told where and was sure that the twins did not know either. Remus (he had been told numerous times to call him that, old habits die hard and all) and Tonks were going for his 'protection' as Dumbledore had said it.

"You ready?" Remus asked.

"Yeah, the Cauldron, right?" Neville asked. Remus shook his head.

"Moody said that there was a faster way there. Address is 'Vulcan's Armory, Knocturn Alley'. Say it quietly." Remus told him as he placed a local area silencing ward up quickly. "Yes, Knocturn, now go through after Tonks." The older man told him before he could ask the question. Tonks went through first to make sure it was okay. If she jumped back through within thirty seconds, it wasn't safe. He went through next and walked out of the fire with little difficulty. It was hard to remember that you had to keep your feet firmly planted and not move until you stopped spinning, same thing with portkey use. The room was leathery with bits of metal, swords, shields, and other protective things littered the walls and tables. The flames that lit up the room were an odd yellow and green and gave the room a slightly creepy feel. He nearly jumped when he saw a full sized dragon head attached to a wall. Fred and George made it through as well as Remus and finally Moody.



“Oi! Old man, get your arse out here!” Moody shouted, not exactly the epitome of suspicion that he usually was. A crash was heard from the back as well as a curse or two. Neville wondered how old someone had to be to be old compared to Moody, who had gone to school maybe twenty years after Dumbledore. He got his answer quickly enough.

“My, my. If it isn’t little Alastor! You know, boy, your getting on in age yourself. You finally come for a replacement? That thing must be rotted through by now. Got just the thing. Tell me who your friends are first though. I can’t remember the last time I had so many people in my shop at a time.” The man said, his eyes seeming to be made of fire dancing over the small crowd he had in front of him.

“This here is Fred and George Weasley, you may want to talk to them later about a shop they have in the Alley.” Moody started.

“What, not going to check to make sure he is who he says he is Mad-eye?” Fred asked. He was hit by a double eye stare for his comment.

“The only way someone could impersonate him might be by polyjuice, this assuming they can get close enough. If they were to drink that potion they would die.”

“Why?” George asked.

“No one save a few could handle his age. They would die.” Moody said. The Weasleys nodded, not quite sure how to take that, but not wanting to make another comment for a change.

“Next we have Longbottom.”

“Longbottom... I met ya father once. Came in here to contract some of my supplies a few years back. Met a few ancestors of yours too. Keep yer skills up, boy. I’ve got a feeling that you’re going to be contracted soon. Sooner then soon maybe.” The old man told him cryptically. The others gave the man, including Moody, and odd look, but Neville paled a few shades and the Old man laughed.

"Nothing to fear boy, if you're here you would have joined anyway I think. You're going to have some pull now. Where were you Alastor?"

"Right... Next we have Tonks-"

"Another Black. Keep seeing them lately. You'll feel it too when it calls." Was all he said.

"And Remus Lupin." Moody finished.

"Ah, a Lycanthrope. Don't be surprised. You shy away from my silver and your eyes say a lot of your condition. When were you bitten?" He asked.

"When I was a child, a monster known as Greyback." Remus said softly, a note of distinct disgust in his tone.

"Sorry to say I knew the man before he turned monster. Hell of a fighter. He accepted his condition almost as soon as it happened to him, and never looked back. His family turned on him though and it drove him mad, sad really, but that is the world we live in. You fight it, and it is killing you slowly, eating you from the inside. You should embrace it. As a fighter it is a gift, as a teacher it can be enlightening, as a pacifist it can be a release. Embrace the wolf and it will help you. How old do you think Fenrir is?" The fire eyed man asked.

"Fifty maybe? He bit me almost thirty five years ago." Remus said.

"Fenrir Greyback is over three hundred years old. As werewolf standards go, he is now an elder and has a lot of clout among the packs. If he concentrated more on his abilities instead of turning as many people he could he might have become a full Lycan by now. Instead the natural strength that a werewolf has passed into his human form as well, making him the strongest werewolf, transformed or not, in the world at the moment."

"What's a 'Lycan'?" Neville heard Tonks ask.

"A werewolf who has surpassed the simple transformation once a month and has embraced their wolf, becoming part of it, and it a part

of you. It is not unlike a full Animagus transformation. Once this happens they can turn into their wolf at any time.” He finished. “Sorry, I’m Vulcan by the way, resident Black’s Smith here. You’ll want to know about yer friend I suppose. I’ll see if he is available.” Vulcan said. He threw in a powder that was in a pot that had more dust on it then Neville had ever seen before. The man reached into it and pulled out a fine black powder. He threw it into the fire and the flames turned a bright silver and black.

“Black Alley, Master’s Keep.” He shouted into the hearth. To all those present he seemed to growl at the flames. Remus could almost make out what he said though, like hearing English spoken by someone with a horrible accent.

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Seraph was awoken this time not by an elf but an echoing growl around the room. He got out of bed groggily and wondered how he had got there when he did not remember going to bed.

“You there, young master? Some friends of yours wish to see you.” He heard clearly. He shook his head, that could only be Vulcan. ‘Vulcan speaks Grimtongue?’ Seraph thought as he gave a big yawn, and let out a growl as he stretched his back.

“Yeah, I’m here Vulcan. Give me five minutes.” He heard a confirmation and the connection close. He grabbed a pair of pants and a sleeveless shirt he used for working out as well as his wands and their holsters and his cloak and boots. He told Dobby that he would be leaving for a while and to tell Cheleb too if he asked. He did not notice that his body was no longer lithe like it was, nor did he notice that the air around him felt slightly thicker, or the ease and speed in which he moved. He decided to keep his cloak off for the time being and jumped through the fire as he threw some powder down.

“Who the hell are you?” Was the demand as soon as he walked out of the large fire place as if it were a door.

"I'm me, who are you?" He asked.

"You first." The shifty eyed man said.

"A bit childish of you, isn't it Moody? A sort of am not, are too type feel. Who do you think that I am?" Seraph asked with a grin.

"You know who I am so I think you were about to tell us, boy." Moody growled. Seraph gave out a bark like laugh that made Remus take a second look at the person before him.

"Fred, George, good to see you both. I haven't checked out the shop yet. Tonks, glad your doing okay. Ask if you need anything. Neville, not expected but certainly welcome, good to see you too. I have the perfect place to get you a new wand. Remus," Seraph said as the man smiled and pulled him into a hug which shocked most present. "Good to see you. Sorry I did not get back with you sooner."

"No harm done, H-Seraph." Remus said. Seraph smiled.

"So what brings you to my neck of the woods?" He asked.

"I'm sorry," Neville interrupted. "But who are you? And how do you know so much about us?"

"Me? Names Seraph Black and we've known each other for a few years. Sorry about dragging you to the Ministry by the way." Understanding dawned on Neville then, as it did the rest of them.

"Harry? They said you were alive, but you don't look like Harry. Or sound like him." Neville said.

"True, that's because I'm not Harry. Harry Potter is indeed dead. Well, as dead as never being alive can be anyway. Harry Potter never existed technically, just me. Long story short, I'm a Black by blood, Potter, among others, by magic. My appearance was part of a charm my mother developed. I'm surprised that she didn't go into Ravenclaw, actually. I just hope I don't find out that she had some of her blood." Seraph said, confusing others further.

“You look like Sirius, mate. Major player he was as I hear it.” Fred said and George wiggled his eyebrows suggestively.

“You didn’t look like this the last time though, I mean you looked like Harry for sure, but you did not have all those yummy muscles. Or the tattoos.” Tonks said, and Remus growled a bit. Tonks laughed and reassured Remus by kissing him deeply.

Seraph finally took stock of his appearance and was a bit shocked to see that Tonks was right. Even after his workout the day before he had little more than stringy muscles covering his arms. Now they were large and clearly defined, something you would expect with your typical Rugby player, if only a bit smaller. He flexed his arms in amazement and picked up one of Vulcan’s random long swords sitting on a table. The must have been nearly twenty pounds, but it felt light to him, too light to do much damage, actually. He took the tip and the handle each in a hand and bent, and the metal complied, if a bit reluctantly. The crowd in front of him looked to be amazed, but Vulcan looked like he wanted to be smug but also offended at having one of his swords used for such an act.

“Couldn’t do that yesterday.” He said quietly to himself. He put the sword back on the table and finally noticed the pressure around him and the push he associated with being a grim and the shadow realm. “No way...” They heard him mutter. It seemed that just about everything from his grim form had transferred to his human form. Except... No it was just the room. He now had a constant scan on, a little less powerful than the one that happened when he was a grim but he was able to the magic around things. He had not noticed because the leathers and swords did not give off a heavy magical residue.

“What did you do, Seraph? Nothing illegal, I hope.” Remus said, a bit of a smile showing through.

“No more than Dad and the rest did, though I plan on doing more than making a motorcycle fly.” Seraph said with his slightly feral grin, reminding Remus who his father was.

"You must have been close to it then." Vulcan commented, making Neville and the Weasleys and Tonks too, very confused. Moody had a vague idea of what the boy had done and knew that it could only help.

"Full." Seraph said and he smirked at Moody's intake of breath.

"You know, if you were going to talk in code we could leave." Fred said, his twin nodding in agreement. Neville could not help but agree as well.

"There are several degrees of Animagus transformation." Seraph began. "I was gifted with a full one by an ancestor of mine when I had my 'Right of Passage' as a Black, among other things. I just took the potion yesterday. I had been passed out since the transformation ended late last night, maybe early this morning." He explained.

"So what are you?" George asked.

"Yeah and how can we be one too?" Fred continued.

"We can't have you getting all the birds,"

"It would break our rep,"

"Something were not prepared,"

"To accept at the moment." Fred finished.

"I'll be right behind you." Neville was heard saying, and Seraph thought it uncharacteristic of him to make a comment like that but was glad he felt he fit in here.

"You might be able to, Longbottom. It's been long enough; we may see an increase in magical Animagus this generation." Vulcan said off handedly. Seraph looked at him oddly.

"There something I should know about?" He asked.

“Nothing you wouldn’t have figured out on your own soon enough, but since you ask, your friend may be joining that little club you were thinking of restarting. He seems at ease here, but I’m not sure he feels the same at where they are staying. Needs to learn Occlumency too.” Vulcan told him. Seraph gave Neville a hard look over before he commented next.

“Herboligist?” Seraph asked, still looking at Neville who jumped a bit at the word.

“Right in one, young master Black.”

“Could use one of those, not sure I like my apothecary for more than the special ingredients found there. I understand that He had difficulties finding both potion masters and Herboligists. Made some problems for the Weasley’s a few thousand years down the road.” Seraph said, making the twins wonder what he was talking about.

“You found the texts then, good. Glad that gift helped you read them, though you would have naturally been able to understand it, eventually. But yes, he had trouble keeping potions masters after the original left, so he looked towards his Herboligists to pick up the slack. Those damn gnomes were the most bloody annoying things he ever made.” The old man said, thinking back to days long past.

“Garden gnomes?” Fred asked.

“Someone created Garden gnomes?” George asked in disbelief.

“Yeah, to act as Herboligists while the real ones were brewing. Didn’t work out though.” Seraph said pensively. Vulcan gave a hearty laugh at that.

“You are going to restart the Gui-” Neville had started but was cut off.

“Yes, and don’t say it.” Seraph said.

“When?” The boy asked.

"Not sure, but soon, I think. How warded is this place, Vulcan?" Seraph asked.

"Second only to your Alley." Vulcan assured him. Seraph nodded and looked thoughtful for a moment.

"What's been happening?" He asked finally, and was told. He could not believe that Dumbledore had tried to find another pawn so fast, and was disgusted at the lengths that Weasel and Granger would go to please the old man. He was interested in the Orders reaction to his death and was pained to find out that there weren't that many people who cared about his death. He shook his head as they finished.

"Old man never stops. Okay Nev, you have two options here. You can come with me and train for the war that is about to erupt, or you can stay with Dumbles and the Overcooked Turkeys. The old man won't let you learn anything that he deems 'dark' or unnecessary. I plan on learning everything and anything that will help me in the war, not to mention that Dumbles would forcefully object to what I plan on doing this summer, the Ministry would too, I imagine. Unless you object to it, you will be joining me later anyway; I'm offering you a head start. Think about that for a minute." Seraph told him.

"Vulcan, how many of those dummies do you have waiting for programming lying around?"

"Depends on how real ya want 'em." Vulcan said.

"Like the last one."

"I've got maybe four of them in the back, just finished. Knew you would be needing them. Fixed that little blood problem too. They are all programmed for spell and physical combat. They react to the skill you show. A punch and a kick will allow it to gauge your strength and can be set to just above your level. It knows quite a few spells, but you have to have a good grasp of Legilimencey to implant more. I had a breakthrough when I found out about this muggle invention, Computers? Well, all you have to do is duplicate your memory and place it in the box inside its mind via Legilimencey. Very useful. I've given it all the memories I have of my combat training, so it can



actually teach you instead of just sparring. The voice has been a bit of a problem though, real low so you have to strain to hear it.” Vulcan said proudly.

“Good, I’ll take them. Dobby!” He shouted at no one. Suddenly a small dark green dog popped into existence. Once it saw Seraph, it turned back into Dobby to the surprise of everyone but Seraph.

“There are some dummies in the back; can you take them to the Alley for me?” Seraph asked. Dobby said he would and left.

“What the bloody-”

“Hell was that?”

“That? Dobby, you’ve probably met him if you visit the Hogwarts kitchens for any stretch of time.” Seraph said offhandedly. Vulcan sighed.

“Not again.” He said softly. Seraph explained what had happened and was given some strange looks before the others shook their heads.

“I’ll go with you, Har-Seraph. That’s going to take some getting used to. I’m not sure I could pretend to be happy there, or deal with Ron and Hermione much longer. Ginny seems to really miss you, in a twisted sort of way though.” Neville told him, to which Seraph gave a rue laugh.

“Yeah, probably blames Ron or Dumbledore for my death right?” He asked, and Neville nodded. “I think Dumbledore started thinking that he needed a more permanent way to control me so he was going to bind me to Ginny. Had he done that, I would have to listen to whatever Ginny told me to do, which would be whatever Dumbledore told her to tell me.” Seraph told them.

“How do you know that, Seraph? I mean, I don’t doubt you or anything, but how?” Remus asked.

“Bit of deduction and I can see auras a bit. I don’t think he wanted to control Granger, but she did the same to her for Weasley. You can

see it in the very outside, their aura will take on the same color as the binder.” Everyone looked surprised and disgusted about this news, but the twins were livid.

“When we get our hands-”

“On that little... thing, he’s going-”

“To be in a world of hurt.”

“Be subtle about it though you two. You don’t want Dumbles on your case. And leave Granger alone for the moment, I think its nothing more then she deserves at the moment.” Seraph said without remorse. The twins nodded in agreement.

“Vulcan, think you can outfit them for me? I’d say pants, vest, boots, and wand holsters. If you guys suddenly showed up wearing dragon hid cloaks someone might thing something was up. I’ll pay you when they get finished.” Seraph told the leather worker.

“No need. Now who’s first?” Vulcan asked. Though there were many objections, most loudly from Remus and the Weasley twins about charity, and Neville who insisted on paying for it himself, they were all measured up. Seraph decided that Remus and Neville needed cloaks like his as well, Remus because besides the obvious protection, they were good cloaks and he needed one, and Neville because he was going to be training with Seraph, as well as walking around Knocturn without a wand for a bit. The fitting took a little over an hour and a short amount later they were ready to leave.

“I’ll see if I can’t make a mail pouch like the Goblins have once I understand runes a bit better. If I can’t, I’ll buy a couple and send you one. We can communicate much easier and faster that way.” Seraph told Remus before he bid everyone farewell.

“Where are we going, Seraph?” Neville asked as they left the shop and he got his first good look at the infamous Knocturn Alley.

“Wand. Ollivander’s isn’t the only place to go to get a wand.” Seraph told him.

“My Gram said the same thing.” Neville said as they traversed the alley with their hoods up and obscuring features activated. They were given a wide berth in the alley anywhere they went and Neville was glad that they had left the main alley after a while. Seraph stopped and pointed to a small sign that read Dexter’s before he walked in.

“Who is it that does disturb my keep?” asked a wizened voice from a back room.

“One who wishes to do business with the keeper.” Seraph replied, wondering if he would have to go through this every time he came here.

“Ah, the young Black returns, with a friend who already needs to be in need of a wand. Who are you, ‘friend’?” The man asked Neville.

“N-neville Longbottom.” Neville said, cursing himself for sounding scared.

“Longbottom, eh? Met Janice once upon a time, quite a looker back in the day. She’d be your grandmother, yes? Got her second wand a little bit after they became illegal. Good wand that was. Your friend here seems to favor the exotic though, one of the best wands I’ve created yet. Well come on then, I just finished with a customer so all my stuff is still out.” Dexter told him. He explained the process and left Neville to his own devices.

“Black, that customer I mentioned, I think you might be interested in his identity.” Dexter said as he motioned Seraph to come closer. “The young Malfoy came in a few minutes to collect a new wand, seems he wanted to shed himself of a lot of things today, even broke his old wand in half and said something about his father’s tracking charms. He carried the family ring of the Malfoy’s, so his father has made him the head of the family.” Dexter continued.

“Lucius can no longer be seen in public, can he? So he makes Draco the head so he can do business for him. Not sure I have that much confidence in him.” Seraph said.

“No, you shouldn’t. Boys mind isn’t as open as some but his aura can be read like a book. He’s scared, real scared. I’d say he skipped out on his father today and is panicking now that he’s out. I think he may run to the slums, he was asking about an inn down there.”

“What in?” Seraph asked.

“Vesta’s, I think. Why, you know the place?” Dexter asked.

“Never been there, but I know someone who is, I just wonder how he knows. Where is it anyway, I’ve got a standing appointment.” Seraph asked, watching as Neville selected his final ingredient.

“Go a couple blocks up, three to the right, one to the left and take the stairs down. If you’ve never been down there, don’t act surprised. The roof is about a hundred feet up and there are two hags to a corner. Don’t take the Bliss Tonic, it’s highly addictive and you’ll be robbed blind once you do. The inn is straight ahead, you can’t miss it as it’s the only clean thing around.” Dexter told him as Neville came over with his selections.

“Lets see, olive and walnut, not often we see a dual wooded wand. I say olive for the handle and walnut stem. Abraxan tail hair and Gytrash blood. Solid combination. I say excellent for earth based magic. Come back in an hour or so to pick it up.” Dexter said. Neville and Seraph walked around Knocturn Alley for a bit and grabbed a bite at the same restaurant Seraph and Cheleb had eaten at. An hour later they returned for the wand and Neville was not disappointed. Bright amber sparks and a silver whip-like vine extended from the wand. Neville paid and they left quickly in their search for Vesta’s Inn. It took nearly an hour to navigate the short way even with the hesitant glances that were sent their way. No less then four hags had practically tried to jump Seraph and the pair had been offered Bliss Tonic several times before one ratty looking man was picked up by his collar and thrown into a wall by Seraph. Dexter had not been kidding when he said that they would not be able to miss the place. A bright silver sign proclaimed the ‘Luna Argentum’ for all to see.

“Let’s go.” Seraph told Neville. Neville nodded and followed Seraph through the bright doors.

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I had to end the chapter. As you can see, the confrontation between Narcissa and Seraph is coming up. This chapter probably would have gone on for another 4,000 words, but I don't want an 18,000 some word chapter. As it stands, this was exactly 14,756 words. Making this the longest chapter in the story thus far, also pushing it to the 100,000 word mark if my math is right. It amazes me that I, someone who had no plan on having a long story, has a story that has reached 100,000. Well, enough of that. What did you guys and gals think? Hope you all enjoyed the Animagus transformation, as well as Dobby's. That had to be the single most random thing that I've thrown into this story and it may even have some possibilities. I'm going to go through this chapter again in a bit, it needs to be posted now as I won't be near a computer for the weekend.

Okay, what should Neville's Animagus form be. Full or not? I've got some more questions, but I'll ask in another chapter.

Hoped you like, remember to review.

Last Time...

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## Chapter 15: Reluctant Meetings

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Inside there was the same sharp contrast to the rest of the slums as the outside was. They were stopped by a man who looked like he had too many muscles to fire off a spell, but it was only for a moment, and they were let through after Seraph gave him a handful of galleons. Seraph concentrated for a moment and gave himself a goatee and pulled out his rose tinted glasses and pulled his hood off. The rose tint quickly turned into highly reflective silver and put them on. He looked at Neville for a moment and the boy pulled out his wand. He had recently been looking over disguising charms at Longbottom manor and had found one that would lengthen ones hair (while generally he liked his hair short, he wanted to know it for when he needed it long. Heads of families traditionally kept their hair this way) and concentrated hard on the desired length and spoke the incantation softly while tapping his head with his wand. Light brown hair down to his shoulders sprouted and he too took his hood off, wondering how Seraph had gotten a goatee so fast.

Seraph nodded and walked up to the bartender. He noted that while the man wore dress robes, they seemed to be tailored for his line of work, not something one would wear when going out. The nametag

said that his name was Fortis and that he was the head tender in the place. Seraph took out a galleon and began to play with it in his hand.

“Hey, barkeep, I need a room number.” Seraph told him, the galleon spinning between his knuckles in a practiced way.

“Couldn’t tell ya’. If someone wanted to see you, you would know.” The man said.

“I just want to talk man. Besides, I may be able to take the ice bitch off your hands.” Seraph said, as he added three more galleons to his little ‘juggle’. By the way he was doing it you would think he had practiced forever on keeping the coins moving, and Seraph blessed his new found control. The man was slightly impressed, but he did not show it, and that was how Seraph wanted it. Make it look like he bribed people routinely.

“Ice bitch you say, got plenty of those around here.” The man said and motioned to a group of beautiful women in the back corner. “For the right amount they’ll tear your heart out and fuck you twelve ways from Sunday.” Seraph took out another galleon and slammed it to the table.

“Stop the games. Yay tall, blonde, stuck up, probably been staying here for a while. Some snot nosed punk probably came in here looking for her earlier. Where’s the room.” Seraph said, lowering his glasses a bit so the man could see his eyes. During the conversation he had changed them from their usual silver and emerald to completely silver, even the pupil and sclera was silver, making his eyes look like liquid silver, almost as reflective as his glasses were. The bartender let out a breath and pointed to the back saying one word.

“Ten.” Seraph nodded and pulled his glasses up. The man did not notice when Seraph walked away with the galleons he had been tempted with. Seraph traversed the hall with Neville in tow and came to the door marked ‘10’. A bright yellow sign on the front door proclaimed ‘Do not disturb’. Seraph smirked and knocked on the door. The tersely whispered conversation that Seraph could barely make

out, even with his increased hearing, suddenly cut off. A high pitched screech was the answer to the knock.

“Can you not read? Do Not Disturb!” Seraph smirk widened into almost a grin and offered a knock to Neville, who having been informed on the way down who they were coming to see, knocked loudly.

“Ignorant servant, I’ll have you fired if you dare to bother me again.” The screech said.

“Sounds like our cue. Keep your hood up and keep quite, matter of fact, why don’t you try the cloaks other features and stay in the shadows. They won’t want me there, let alone another stranger.” Seraph told Neville. Seraph grabbed hold of the handle and gave it an experimental squeeze, still not completely comfortable with his new strength. The handle held strong, though a light impression in the metal was made. He gave it a sharp turn only to find that the lock would not move, though the handle crumpled a bit. It was locked, most likely by a strong charm. Seraph sighed and took a step back and produced his wand.

“Silencio.” He said softly, and the soft mumbling that made it through the door stopped again. He felt a burning, tingly feeling in his hand. His palm began to glow, and he held it in front of him aimed at the door. The glow turned into a dark flame that covered his palm and he pushed the sensation through his hand. A ball of black and silver flames flew from his hand and impacted the door. The charm, which was designed to keep the door locked and sealed at its corners, did not fall, but the wooden door split at its middle. Seraph pushed through the door that was quickly turning to ash and created a hole large enough to get into the other side. The inhabitants of the room were stunned for a few seconds as the door to the room was blasted and burnt open and a man in a dragon hide cloak with glasses on stepped through. Watching the man kept them from noticing a second shadowy but confused and awed figure make its way through as well.

“Sorry about that, damn thing wouldn’t open.” Seraph said, suddenly remembering Hagrid coming through a door in much the same way



once, sans the pyrotechnics. His comment was met with two wands and a pair of spells shot his way.

“Stupefy!” Draco roared.

“Ligatio” His mother said quickly, preparing for another spell if the first did not hit. Seraph dodged the first and put up a light blue Protego shield. The spell splattered across it.

“This how you treat all your guests?” Seraph asked as he dodged another Stupefy and a laceration curse he had seen used once.

“You two should really stop, especially if I’m the one who’s going to make sure neither one of your asses get killed.” The man said, and Draco paused for a moment but his mother shot two consecutive blasting curses at the intruder. The man threw up a shield which took the curse but was shattered by the second.

“Fine.” Seraph said as he began to see different colored lines on their bodies and their auras were plain to see. Draco was as scared as Dexter had said, which was no surprise, but his mother seemed to be slightly scared, angered, and though it was overpowered by the other two, protective. Seraph moved as fast as he could and hit Draco in his side, right where there was a pale green spot he felt meant some sort of incapacitation and put his wand just under Narcissa’s chin. Draco fell to his knees and began to wheeze heavily, unable to breathe. Narcissa looked into his glasses with barely contained rage and veiled fear. Seraph was tempted to raid her mind, even if he did not have any real experience outside of Snape, and leave her there, but knew that she could prove useful in more than Death Eater information. He had felt his hand burn and kept his fist closed; he did not want to burn any more of the place down unnecessarily.

“Feel up to that talk now?” Seraph asked. The woman continued to glare at him. “How about we do it this way. Petrificus Totalus.” The woman’s arms snapped to their sides as she fell to the seat behind her. The angle of her legs as they were petrified forced her to sit but be unable to move.

“Much better. Now for that door.” Seraph said as he transfigured a drawer into a crude door and put up as strong a locking charm he could. It was a simple ‘Calaportus’ but he felt it would hold if someone tried to knock the door in like he had. He placed a silencing charm on it again and sat in Draco’s vacated seat.

“Nice room.” Seraph commented as he looked around. “Sit down Draco.” He commanded as he saw the boy go for his wand. A quick ‘Accio’ took that problem away. “Nice wand. Don’t move and Dexter won’t have to make you another one.” Draco looked a bit shocked but put his Slytherin training to use and made his face as impassive as he could, which was not much.

“Narcissa Black, do you know who I am?” Seraph asked. He received a glare for an answer. “Course you don’t. Doesn’t matter until later in this conversation anyway. You have a problem, and I think it would be worth it to help you out. You and your son are, or at least he soon will be, in the same boat. Lets do it this way.” Seraph said as he summoned her wand as well. He thought about it for a second and summoned ‘weapons’, receiving two silver daggers a wand like stick that had a rune at the end of it, not unlike a cattle prod. ‘Items’ was summoned next and he received two trunks, a small foeglass, and a bra. He was slightly disappointed, he figured she would be holding at least a portkey to get out quickly.

“I think you can handle speaking now.” Seraph said as he ended the hex. Narcissa smoothed out her robes and tried to gain back some semblance of superiority in the situation.

“Who are you?” She demanded in her haughty voice. Seraph rolled his still silver eyes and sighed, taking off his glasses and looking at her. She was able to hold in her shock, but Draco let out a slight gasp, though it was quickly covered by a cough.

“Who I am is of no concern, as I think I have said before. What does concern you is that you have at least one person after your blood. This person is backed by very powerful friends, I think you know them, black cloaks, white masks, ringing any bells? Your husband is inner circle and orders from him may as well come from Voldie himself, low ranking cronies don’t distinguish second hand orders. Probably hired

assassins too, and I think you are making their job too easy. Now, you want to live, otherwise you would not be hiding. I have something you need, and you have something I need.” He told her.

“And what is that?” She demanded again, but Seraph ignored her.

“Draco Malfoy, or Lord Malfoy if you would prefer.” Seraph said, and saw that Draco was about to comment, and Narcissa did gasp this time. Evidently they had not gotten that far in their conversation. “I however prefer neither, but will settle for the former. You are hunted as well, or you will be when you fail to return to him. Must be the single most Gryffindor and Slytherin thing that I have ever heard. Turned on your father and took his lordship. You do realize that your going to be damned in both sides of this war, don’t you? You have both less and a great magnitude more to offer then your mother. Which is why I am prepared to offer you both something and you in particular.”

“And what is that?” Draco asked, echoing his mother, but he didn’t have the same tone. Maybe he wasn’t as stupid as he appeared.

“Asylum, something that I doubt you’ll find outside of me. You can take your chances however. I can simply take what I want from you, Narcissa, and Draco, you would find me eventually.” Seraph told them.

“Why would I look for you?” Draco asked before his mother could make a comment, probably the smartest thing he had ever done up until then. Seraph gave his lopsided feral grin.

“You would appreciate it. It all has to do with blood. You have a choice, accept my help, or stay here. What is your answer?” Seraph asked. Draco looked at his mother for a moment and looked at Seraph, avoiding his eyes.

“We’ll go. Do we have your oath on this?” Draco asked. Seraph thought about it for a moment.

“I swear upon blood and magic to grant asylum to Narcissa Black and Draco Malfoy should they choose to accept. So mote it be.” Seraph

intoned and felt his magic flare, a black and silver flash took place and Draco nodded. Narcissa stood still though.

“Who are you?” She asked again, not a bit haughtily. Actually Seraph was surprised to note that she seemed either in awe or hiding how scared she felt at the moment. Her aura said both.

“Come with me and I’ll tell you.” Seraph promised. “Come on out.” He said to nowhere it seemed to the pair. Out of a dark corner someone stepped out dressed like the stranger who had granted them his help.

“What? Think I would barge into a potentially dangerous situation without back-up?” He asked them. “Come on.” He said, throwing a couple of cloaks at them. “Put those on. Once we get out of the subdivision it won’t take long to get to where we’re going.” Draco put the cloak on over his expensive robes and Seraph wondered how the hell he made it down there without getting mugged. Narcissa put it on reluctantly, the thing was old and worn for Merlin’s sake!

“You never said what you wanted from us.” Narcissa said as they made their way out of the Inn.

“Information, knowledge, service. Not all from you but between the two of you. You were married to a Death Eater for years. I’ll need to know as much as possible. You carry a Rune Stick, so obviously you know runes and are therefore educated. You do nothing for a living and have, or rather had, access to a great amount of ‘private’ knowledge and I refuse to believe that you are simply some snobby homemaker. No, you were prized for more than being a trophy.” Seraph said and saw Narcissa smirk, gaining her arrogant demeanor again.

“You made a choice, long ago. That choice has guided your life. Draco, Malfoy blood or not, will make that choice soon.” He now smirked as he saw her pale. “Things are being set in motion, and a long forgotten piece of history will resurface, from the shadows one might say.”

“But-” Narcissa started.

“No, not the place to speak of it. I will say no more until we reach our destination.” Seraph told her as they went up the stairs to Knocturn Alley proper. The walk to Black Alley was silent and thankfully uneventful. The group accompanying him looked confused when he stopped in front of a wall. He wrote out the location on a bit of rubbish and showed them each in turn. The door appeared before them and Seraph thought Narcissa was about to collapse when she saw the Black family crest on the door. The grim nodded and opened for them.

“You... you’re...You!” Narcissa said unintelligibly. Seraph returned his eyes to their normal emerald and silver and took off his glasses and lifted his hood.

“Very eloquent. I’d expect more from you. But yes, I am me.” Seraph said and continued through the vast hallway. Narcissa remained stuttering as Neville followed, failing in trying to hold in a laugh. Draco grabbed his mother by her elbow and pulled her forward.

“This is the Zen Courtyard. Every door here is a Manor of sorts. I’ve never been in any but one, so I don’t know what they look like and can’t recommend any particular one. You may share if you wish, but there are more than enough for you two to have one to yourself. This is Black Alley, your Asylum for as long as you choose it. I use the term ‘Asylum’ and ‘choice’ loosely, as it will also keep my secrets here as well, which means you. At least until you two,” Seraph said looking at Neville and Draco “can properly protect your minds.”

Draco looked indignant at this.

“No one will keep me against my will. I am a Malfoy. And who the hell are you?” The boy demanded, looking at Neville. Evidently assured protection gave him a bit of confidence. Neville removed his hood as well and nearly laughed at the face that Draco made.

“You? Longbottom? What the hell is a blood traitor doing here?” Draco may have commented further, but he was picked up by his neck and unable to say anything else.

"That's rich, Malfoy. Considering that you just turned on your father." Seraph said and dropped him. Draco got up quickly and dusted off his robes.

"But, Longbottom? He's barely more than a squib!" Draco shouted.

"I could take you, Malfoy." The usually timid boy said, spitting the last word as if it was a dirt curse. He pulled out his wand to emphasize his point.

"What, the noble Gryffindor going to fight someone without a wand?" Draco said with a sneer. Neville hesitated, but Seraph spoke up.

"Maybe he won't, yet. But I have no qualms." Seraph told him. Draco took a step back unconsciously, much the same way Cheleb had, when Seraph began to growl at him. Seraph quickly found that the growl had the same qualities that the grim's possessed and sent slight shivers through the air. He was sure Draco pissed himself at that moment and wondered why he would want to work with someone like that.

"And who are you?" Was the question that was asked for the fifth or so time after Draco had gotten over his fear, coincidentally the same time that Neville and Seraph put their wands away.

"Who do you think? Black crest on the door, place called 'Black Alley', that should at least tell you I'm a black. I believe I mentioned that this is my home, so more than likely I own it. That implies that I am the head. Sirius was the last Head, and only a blooded Black can take the Headship. This further implies that I must be Sirius' son. Something your mother has already deduced considering her near catatonic state." Seraph said a bit patronizingly. Draco continued to go red as each clue was dropped on his head. Narcissa seemed to break out of her stupor at this moment.

"This is all your fault then." Narcissa said quietly. Having her conclusions ratified seemed to leave her exhausted.

"No, you brought this upon yourself. You were disowned because of your ties. You were connected financially to Voldemort and anything

that hurts him, helps me. That took care of half, and Draco just severed Lucius' only other resource. Sadly, I'm not sure how long dear Lucius will last when his usefulness has run short. I'm sure the man bought himself into the inner circle, like he does everything else. Without the money he will either be killed or be forced to take a grunt position. I'll try to not lose sleep over it." Seraph said.

The blasé manner in which he spoke about ruining her life was more than the woman could take, and she charged at him only to be held by her arms pinned to her sides. Neville had shot her with a petrifying spell and she fell face forward into the black sand.

"All right, maybe we'll talk later. Winky, take Narcissa to one of my rooms and monitor her." Seraph asked the air, but Winky quickly popped in and after telling him that dinner would be ready in fifteen minutes, took Narcissa and popped away.

"Well, for the moment, your mother is staying inside my part of the Alley. There are plenty of rooms, so you can stay in one. I think there is a lot the three of us need to speak about. But first, we eat." Seraph said, as he took a straight path through the garden to the large paper doors at the far side of the alley. Draco and Neville looked at each other for a moment, each putting as much anger as they could into their best glare, before they ran to catch up with Seraph.

Dinner was a quite affair. Neville complemented Seraph on it and he promised to pass it to the cook. Draco was a bit more reserved, probably thinking about the events leading up to the table he was sitting at. The pale boy chewed slowly and looked at Seraph often. He had been impressed today, the man had found them quickly and easily and had made them willing hostages within a few minutes. His home was nothing to scoff at either. While it was laid out oddly, it was more grand than Malfoy Manor and was able to be less stifling as well.

"Who's side are you on?" Draco asked. Neville looked up at the question. While he knew more about what was going on than Draco, it might be nice if things were totally clear. He saw Seraph grin in a very disconcerting way.

“My own.” Seraph told him. He rather enjoyed keeping Draco in the dark, maybe the ponce would learn some humility. Of course, maybe it should be the training dummies he had just acquired that should do the teaching.

“Unless you own the Ministry as well, I don’t think that that is an answer.” Draco bit out.

“Of course it is an answer. I could have said anything and it would be an answer if I stated it after you posed a question. Semantics, Draco. Yes, my side of the war. Or will be my side of the war. What do you know of the history of the Blacks?”

“Epitome of a pureblood family for more then fifty generations, further back then the founding of Hogwarts. They were a political powerhouse at one point and several became Ministers. Always powerful, almost always dark.” Draco told him. Seraph nodded.

“So you know nothing.” Draco’s face gained some color and he was about to speak before Seraph cut him off. “Had events been different I think your mother would have explained things in greater detail. You are now eating at a table that was used by the Head of Black’s immediately family for generations several thousand years ago. To say that the Black family was old would be an understatement. The hallway that you went through shows the grandfather of the first Black back in the time of Merlin, I think.”

“Why was the father or grandfather of the first Black not a Black?” Draco asked.

“Same question I asked.” Seraph said as he began to go into more detail concerning the Black’s history up until the forming of the Guild.

“When is your birthday, Draco?”

“About a week, why?” Draco asked.

“On the eve of that day you will be given a choice. Not be me, but by your ancestors. What you choose need not ever be told, but we will figure it out eventually. You are going to meet the first Black and his



father, possibly more but unlikely. This choice will affect your life. I was able to speak with them a bit early. There is a war going on. A war the public does not know about and will deny when they do find out about it. I mentioned my side of the war before. Let me tell you a bit more history” Seraph said before he took sip of tea. The Guild was explained as well as the formation of the families and the fact that no names were recorded, though he should ask Vulcan about it later. He told them what the Guild primarily did, which brought a smirk to Draco’s face.

“I’m being charged with setting up the Guild again. There are many lines that have died out over the years, but I know that some remain strong. The Guild was not just a group, it was a brotherhood, a family. They connected each other to the Guild by blood, and thousands of years later their successors are still connected. You both carry that blood, and you both would have joined me later anyway. I’ve already offered it to Neville, but I am offering it to you as well, Draco. I am training for this war that is about to break upon the country. I’m not going to confront the man head on, I want to do it from the shadows. Quickly, quietly, efficiently, break him down, and give his followers something to fear while I’m at it. I want to give you a head start on the training. A lot of this will be self study, as I’m learning just as much as you. There are resources here, and if more are needed we will get them. You won’t be limited on what you learn, light, dark, their labels. I plan on getting stronger, and I will do so by any means that I feel will help. Will you join me?” Seraph asked.

“And if I don’t?” Draco asked.

“I leave you to your own devices for the rest of the summer, but you won’t be leaving here, so I suggest the training of nothing more then to alleviate boredom.” Seraph told him.

“Fine. I’ll do your ‘training’. Not that I’ll need much.” Draco said, his old arrogance making its way into his voice. Seraph grinned evilly.

“Your going to love training, Draco. I promise.” Seraph said thinking about having Cheleb give the boy a bit of incentive to run in the morning. Seraph led them to the third floor and let them pick a room

before going to his own bed and going to sleep, making sure to set his wand for the time he wanted to be up.

Ooo  
ooO

The next morning Seraph woke up to a barking wand about five minutes before Dobby usually got him up to find Dobby standing ready. Seraph shook his head and got up, telling Dobby that there were some new guests and that while he may not want them here, they were not to be harmed, in any obvious ways. He had him wake Neville and Draco and tell them to get up and go down for breakfast.

Seraph got dressed and ready for his morning workout and saw Neville walking down the stairs. At the same time a loud scream could be heard from a door a few yards away. Draco Malfoy came storming out of the room, soaking wet.

“What the hell is wrong with your elf?” Draco screamed as he tried to ring out his clothes. “And why the bloody hell am I awake at this hour anyway?”

“Well for the elf, nothing more then a few loose screws. And your up so that you can join us for breakfast.” Seraph said.

“No, I’ll eat later, I’ll sleep now. And what are you going to do to yourself? I demand punishment!”

“You’ll eat now and train afterwards, as it is what you agreed to, or you can stay in one of the other quarters. As for the elf, he woke you up in whatever way he felt would be most effective.” Seraph said as he continued down stairs. Neville was once again laughing and Draco was livid.

Breakfast was eaten quickly. The food seemed to put Draco in a better mood and woke every one up.

“What is this training going to entail.” Draco asked conversationally. Neville looked at him oddly but Seraph decided not to push the sudden attitude change.

“Physical, mental, magical, ritual.” Seraph said listing it off on his fingers. “Physical includes endurance and strength training as well as muggle fighting like hand to hand combat and weapons, mental includes Occlumency and Legilimencey, magical includes anything in that area from charms to the dark arts, depends on you really, ritual includes any that you wish to perform. I would stray away from anything that requires you to personally sacrifice something, besides blood or pain. Animagus can be included in any of those categories, and is one of the few things that I have completed so far. I have a handful of rituals planned out for the next few weeks too. Malfoy, you may be given one or two gifts after making your right of passage, and some things may become unlocked after it or after your magical maturation. Nev, your family was part of the Guild as too, so you will go through the right of passage as well. Until you can sufficiently shield your minds from people like Snape and Dumbledore, you’ll have to concentrate on Occlumency and its polar for the most part. Animagus will be the first thing that you will accomplish as it does not take that long.” Seraph said, making Neville and Draco think for a bit.

“Why are we supposed to learn muggle fighting? What’s the point when magic is so much better?” Draco asked suddenly.

“Draco, do you remember what I did to you?” Seraph asked, and Draco nodded, thinking about the hit. “That was a muggles means of fighting. I did not want to hurt you, just keep you from doing anything. Wizards are so far behind in technology it is ridiculous. Do you know why there are those who spout about the elimination of Muggles? Because they fear them, and with good reason. Muggles have always outnumbered us, always. We are not better, just a powerful minority of the world’s population. Wizards have been stagnant for generations, lying on their laurels. Muggles have been surpassing them in just about everything not related to magic, and a few things there too. We have a killing curse, an unstoppable green death. They have guns, things that shoot projectiles at amazing speeds. They were made for killing, and not in that sudden shocked way people do when hit by the curse. I have yet to see anything in the Wizarding world that could compete with a bomb. They create large explosions and kill anyone in their way. It is human nature to fear what we do not understand, and that is true for wizard and muggle alike. Voldemort

fears them because he understands them, and knows what they are capable of. He fears a second dark age, modern day witch hunts. It is a valid fear I'll admit, but taking the war to them first was not the way to go about it." Seraph finished, standing up from the table.

The two pensive looking boys followed him to the 'Ghost room' and got their first glimpse of Cheleb, who had decided to take the room as his home. The large grim who had been chewing on a quaffle he had found somewhere was on the two newcomers is a second.

"Down, Cheleb. They will be joining us for the summer. While tempting, try not to kill the yellow one." Seraph told his grim companion.

"Please, just a nibble?" Cheleb pleaded, making Seraph laugh. The laugh was deep and barking, and it reminded Seraph that he may have an easier time with his workout this morning.

"Maybe if he does not run fast enough." Seraph told the animal to placate him.

"What the hell is... or was that?" Draco asked Seraph as the grim retreated to his brooms.

"A Grim, Draco. Try not to piss it off or that incident back in your third year will look like a hug." Seraph warned.

"But I understood... Your Seraph, right? And why did you tell it to bite me if I run slow!" Draco demanded. Seraph was mildly surprised at the revelation but shrugged.

"Your at least half a Black, its not surprising. It's a natural ability called Grimtongue. You can speak to grims and other dogs. Not sure about wolves or werewolves though." Seraph said as he began to stretch, showing the other two how to do it. Draco complained but was threatened again and shut up. They started out with a light jog. Seraph felt like he was walking for as much as he felt it. After a lap Draco was slowing down and turning red and Neville was trying but was not much better off.

“Go for as long as you can guys and meet me by the stands over there.” Seraph told them. They were about to reply when Seraph took off. The atmosphere became heavier as he ran faster, aiding in his movements and nearly propelling him when his foot left the ground. He had never run this fast before, but knew he could go faster. He felt his muscles go taught as he prepared to go all out. He leaned forward a bit and threw everything he had into running. The ghost chose to appear at this time and looked at Seraph, winked at him, and set a pace a few feet in front of him. Seraph grinned and gave chase.

Neville and Draco stopped when Seraph took off. The last time either of them had seen someone move that fast was when they were riding a broom. Not Firebolt fast, but he could certainly outpace a Cleansweep 7. And then he went faster and they had an easier time keeping up with the dirt that his feet were kicking up than the man himself. The Cleansweep had turned into a Nimbus and the two could not believe it.

“What kind of Animal could do that?” Neville wondered out loud.

“What are you on about now, Longbottom?” Draco, who was still trying to watch Seraph asked distractedly.

“He said he had gone through the Animagus transformation earlier. It was a full one. So gained whatever he is doing now from his animal.” Neville explained.

‘Maybe this will be worth it then,’ Draco thought. ‘Except the muggle fighting.’

He loved this. It was a thrill, to be running this fast. His endurance had increased exponentially if he could run this hard and not feel tired. It was a release, and he knew why people liked running. Every movement was like cutting through water and every step was like a glide. He felt that his feet were digging into the earth, but it wasn’t affecting him so he did not care. Absentmindedly he wondered if the room had increased in size as he had been running for a while and had never turned, or if the room was just that big and he did not realize it. He soon realized that it was just that big as he saw a wall off in the distance and he started to turn, and succeeded for the most

part. He started to fall and he tried to stop and ended up sliding for several yards, leaving a trail in the ground.

“Merlin...” He breathed as he took in the skid line and the distance he had run. He couldn’t even see the huge doors or the goal posts from where he was. He grinned. He concentrated on his grim form. The hair, the color, the sight, that feeling of barely controlled coiled muscle. Slowly at first, but faster all the time he began to change and was soon the large grim. He took a deep breath and growled as loud as he could. The suddenness of it hurt his throat, but the growl sent out visible waves into the air, literally tearing up the ground around him and shaking the surrounding area. Seraph suddenly smelled something and turned around to see Cheleb walk out of his shadow.

“Wow Master Seraph! I hope that I can do that when I get bigger.” Cheleb said hopefully as he took in the destroyed area in awe. Seraph assured him he would.

“How do you travel through the shadow realm, Cheleb?” Seraph asked. Cheleb looked very excited about being able to teach Seraph something and started telling him about the shadows.

“Well, you just find a shadow and jump into it. The bigger and darker it is, the easier it will be to go through. The first Grim would tell us of his master sometimes. He said that once he was fully trained in ‘Shadow Walking’ he was able to jump out of the shadow of a blade of grass. I’m working on other people’s shadows right now. Your elves don’t like it though.” Cheleb told him.

“So I just try to get into the shadow? And come out of the next shadow where I want to?” Seraph asked, finding it hard to believe that it was that easy. Cheleb nodded though, and he decided to give it a try. Cheleb was casting a good size shadow and he went for that. He sniffed the shadow first, as if it would reveal its secrets that way and blamed it on the merged personality. It did help though. He knew that the shadow would allow him to pass through if he wanted to. He pushed a paw into it and after it went deeper then the ground would allow it, he pushed the rest of his body through. Cheleb joined him shortly after that, panting slightly. He had used his own shadow to get through.

Seraph looked around and noticed that the shadow realm was much easier to distinguish as a grim than it was as a human. There was little colour but shapes were easily identifiable and distinguished. He began to run towards the other side of the pitch and marveled at how the shadows helped him move. As a human, the shadows had a light hold on him, enhancing the grim's unnatural speed that had transferred to his human form. As a grim, the hold was stronger, the air thick and aided in movement more than as a human. As a grim in the shadow realm it was like having something hold you and push you along in whatever manner you wanted to, like being held in thick water. The feeling was hard to describe but whatever it was, there was more of it here in the shadow realm as a grim.

He got ready, his steps became shorter and he coiled himself, and jumped. He had seen Cheleb jump into the air to catch a broom at close to twenty five feet once, but that had nothing on him. He passed that mark by ten feet at least and just sailed. He landed and stumbled a bit but did not fall. Cheleb joined him a moment later. Seraph concentrated on his human form and began to change. A few moments later he was no longer a grim. The sharpness that he had as a grim in the shadow realm had transferred over slightly, but it was a bit difficult to tell who was who between the two people outside of the shadow realm in front of him. He figured that the one who was making muffled yelling noises was Draco and looked at the shadow he was casting behind him. Seraph got an idea and pushed through the small shadow.

"What are we supposed to do now?" Draco was asking. Seraph was not sure how exactly it worked, but while most of his body was out of the shadow realm, the part that was inside seemed to float up and help him out, making him look like he was rising from the ground unnaturally, which he was. He had made it completely out of the shadow when someone noticed him. He may have gone unnoticed if he had been the height he was at the start of the summer but now he was slightly taller than Draco and Neville saw him over the blonds' head. He backed up quickly but was too scared to say anything. Draco noticed though.

“What’s your problem, Longbottom?” Neville didn’t say anything, whether from the wink that Seraph had given him or he was still in fear, Draco did not know. He felt a light tapping on his shoulder and he nearly jumped out of his skin. Trembling, he slowly looked around and backed up quickly, falling over. This sent Neville into peals of laughter.

“Don’t be so jumpy, Draco.” Seraph told him and motioned the two of them to the weight machines. Neville and Draco just looked at the machines oddly before Seraph muttered “Bloody purebloods” and explained how to use the machines and their weight settings. If they still did not understand he told them to look at the pictures on the side of it. They both looked at the pictures oddly too, as they did not move. Seraph started on the free weights, picking up the usual 15 pounders and nearly threw them when he tried to curl it. He put them back and picked up increasingly heavy weights until he found a pair of comfortable free weights, at 90 pounds a piece. 10 minutes of using the weights in various exercises left him feeling the same as when he started. He was getting frustrated now, he wanted to push himself, it did not matter that he had the unnatural strength of a grim, he needed that challenge. He went over to the bench press and put on every 45 he could. When it was done the bar was bending in the middle and Seraph was satisfied that this should present a challenge. He got under it and pushed. The bar did not move for a moment but then lifted up slowly, and Seraph breathed a sigh of relief. Once he was done with his set he checked up on Draco and Neville.

Draco and Neville had started on the weight machines after a while and had gotten the hang of them, mostly. Seraph had them do certain exercises and an hour later the two were totally worn out. Dobby’s water was passed around and they felt a better. He took them to his study and told them to sit against the wall in a comfortable position. They did so and were handed the same book that Seraph was reading to learn the mind arts. The book had been duplicated and the copies would disappear in a few hours but it was easily copied again. As they began to read, Seraph delved into his mind again to find that the light that had been there before had disappeared and was replaced by a deep black shadow. He was able to see perfectly though, but he knew that no one else would be able to. He found the rest of his unsorted memories and began to sort them like he had



with the other ones. Amazingly he was not disturbed before he had finished all but his recent memories, from just before the end of the last school year, by a growling green pup.

“Winky says that you must eat, Master Seraph.” Dobby told him.

“Okay, we’ll be down in a few minutes. What time is it?” Seraph asked.

“It is eight in the evening. Your guests have also been sitting as you have since you came in.” Dobby said, as he found a very interesting smell behind the chair and went to investigate.

“How did Winky take your transformation?” Seraph asked. He had not heard anything about it and was curious.

“She liked it a lot. She puts a leash on me and walks me around our quarters sometimes. Even when Dobby is not a doggy.” Dobby told him. Seraph was barely able to maintain his composure at that revelation and roused the other two.

“So how far did you two get?” Seraph asked. Draco looked like he was about to throw up and Neville looked ready to cry.

“It took me a while to find my core,” Neville said, wiping his eyes. “But I did find it. Black and green, looks like a tree actually. I got into my mind, but it’s...horrible. I spent most of my time trying to gather my memories together. The memories from before my parents... they look burnt, you know? Like ash, I don’t think I’ll be able to fix them. I think I found my Animagus though. It’s big, but I don’t know what it is.” Neville said softly.

“Where was it? Inside your core, or outside?” Seraph asked.

“Mostly outside, but not all the way. Reminded me of a dog, but greenish, with a mane like a lion, but the size of a bear. I’ve never even heard of anything like it. It was trying to speak to me, I think, but I could not make it out. Sounded like the way you speak sometimes, Seraph.” Neville told him.

“Couldn’t tell you what it was, but I think you’ll understand after you take the potion. What about you Draco?” Seraph asked the still pale boy.

“Not far.” Was all the boy would say for a moment. He seemed to steel himself for a moment and continued. “My animal, it was on the outside. It was, I don’t know... a wolf of some sort, kind of big and silvery grey. It feels...things, like imminent danger or... something. Creepy...” Draco said the last to himself, but with the increased strength and speed, Seraph seemed to have gotten better smelling and hearing as well and heard Draco’s comment clearly. Seraph had not found any real use for better smell; in fact it seemed to be a drawback.

“Good. I can start the potion tonight and you two can stay meditated until it is done or you can start it tomorrow and take breaks in between brewing. I’m finished with my sorting, well, almost, so I will be learning Legilimencey soon, I’ll be able to test out your shields or whatever you used. Time to eat though.” Seraph told them and they followed him out of the room, both still dazed in their own way. Dinner was quite, Draco and Neville were thinking, Seraph was wondering how to ward his mind, and Narcissa had been sedated by Winky earlier.

“Start it tonight.” Neville said suddenly. “How long will it take?”

“About a day. Easy to brew though. You can sort your minds while I make it. You know what your forms are so it should be less painful to painless. You both are going to do a near full transformation, so expect some changes after you pass out.”

“Pass out?” Draco asked, wondering why a green dog was circling his shoe.

“Yeah, I did anyway. The guide never said anything about it, but it may be part of the full transformation.” Seraph told him. The two joined Seraph in his study and took their places, retracing their steps to get to their minds. Seraph had Dobby go to Flytr’s to grab the needed ingredients and started the potion again, reminding Dobby to tell him when the potion needed to be tended. His recent memories

were sorted much faster than the others were, though he had more trouble with them. Reliving all the betrayal was difficult. The memories were put into stars and placed in the sky and made bright. He looked around his mindscape and noticed that after all the memories were placed into the stars, it looked very bare. He thought about it for a minute. Even if someone entered his mind and could not find anything, it might look bad if there was nothing there. The ground was barren, and he decided to change that. The cracked dirt plains of his mind turned rich and brown with some grass, silver grass for some reason, sprouting up here and there.

‘Still not enough,’ He thought to himself. ‘Something in the way, perhaps?’ Using what he remembered of the Dark Forest as a guide, huge towering trees shot out from the ground, creating a huge forest that went on for as far as the eye could see. There were random spots held no trees, only large reflective ponds. Seraph looked into one and saw the stars he had created. ‘Hide in plain sight...’ He thought as he willed a huge full moon and several hundred stars to appear in the sky, making it look like a real night. In the center, or the center as far as he could tell, a huge mountain pushed out of the earth, as if a hand reaching for the heavens. At the very top of the mountain, which he named Olympus, he placed a large silver orb. The orb was made to be brighter than anything in his mindscape and could be seen from anywhere. The clouds that he had not dissipated were gathered here, creating a tremendous storm above the orb, lightning striking the ground anywhere close to the mountain. He concentrated on that hot burning feeling he got in his hands when he threw fire at Kreacher. Black and silver fire surrounded the base of the entire mountain, and Seraph gave a ferocious grin. The whole point of this was to lead any intruders into a trap. While they were trying to get to the orb, he could either push them out or raid their mind, when he learned how to, that is.

‘Still not enough.’ He thought about it some more and concentrated on hundreds of little grim puppies. They probably were not as big as a full grown dog, but a lot of Cheleb’s would do some damage. The pups were spread out through the forest to guard and protect. He laughed as the grims began to explore their new territory and actually climb into the trees and go to sleep like panthers would. He wondered if the claws that he had seen them used were given to them by him or

if he might possess them as well. He stepped back and looked at his mind. It was much better then he would have thought he could do and knew that it was unlikely that someone would find his memories. He could barely tell the memory stars from the others, but he knew which were which. He exited out of his mind and nearly fell over in exhaustion. Dobby, who had been about to rouse his master popped away and brought back some of his water.

"Thanks, Dobby. I think guarding my mind took a lot more out of me then I thought it would." Seraph told him. He checked on the potion and added the next ingredients before he looked at his book.

Should you choose to use another method of protecting your mind, or incorporate your own method with mine, be careful of the magical drain. Adding, ordering, or otherwise altering your mind may prove difficult if you are magically weak or cannot concentrate. Likewise it can be done fairly simply, though still with substantial drain if you have a solid connection to your mind and magic, either through gift or done through ritual. Setting up protections (warding) is much more difficult then simply altering you mind, depending on what type of protection you want. I use an intruder detection ward as well as an identification ward, both simple and easy to set up. However, shields and offensive wards are terribly draining and I don't recommend them. If you set your mind up right, you won't need them. Wards need the area of effect and the power to charge them. Concentrate and will your magic into it.

Legilimencey, intruding into to someone's mind with the goal of finding out information they are unwilling to tell you. Or you don't want them to know that you know. For such a simple aim, there are a dizzying array of styles, some effective, others not so much. This is an art and it therefore can be used and guided in different ways by different people. The most common style, amongst interrogators and thugs is the battering approach. Simply aim the wand, look into the eyes, and say the incantation, thinking of what you want with as much concentration as you can manage with as much power as you can bring to bare. Being a probe is like going through shadows, hopefully you are familiar with the act, if not, think of swimming downstream in a river. Depending on you concentration, the bit that will allow you to look through the mind, and your power, the part that gets you through

the defenses and other protections, you may find yourself blasting through walls or crashing against them. This method is very painful to the mind, theirs, not yours, though constant battering will make you lose concentration. The pain will often distract them and weaken their minds, allowing you to push through and search for what you are looking for. It is crude and as subtle as a wounded dragon, never to be used unless you wish to break their mind.

The method I recommend is based more on concentration than it is on power, though power makes it easier. Like some of the other styles, it does not require a wand, only eye contact, which is why more power makes it easier. Think about what you are looking for, look into their eyes, will yourself into their minds. Too much power will alert a skilled occlumens to your presence, not enough and it won't work. Once in the mind, shadow walk and attempt to scan if possible. If neither is achievable, then you should not be looking at this book. Shadow walking in another's mind is much more difficult than usual, but you will remain undetected. Other styles are covered in this book, but that is all I will say here as it is the best in our line of work. Once an adequate understanding of breaking into someone's mind is understood and some skill achieved, the next step is creating false memories and distinguishing the memories of others.

Seraph put the book down. He needed to wait for the other two to get to his point before he could really try Legilimency. Using Dobby briefly crossed his mind, but was discarded when he realized he did not want to know what was in the elf's little head. He would need a victim, a Death Eater preferably, but one of those idiots trying to sell him Bliss would do just as good. Maybe he would test out his Shadow Walking tomorrow.

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That's the end of that chapter. I'm going to look through it later to see if I can catch anything, which I'm sure will be there, even if I did look through the chapter. Hope you guys like the quicker updates, hopefully they will last.

Considering having Voldie find a sect of the old school 'Shinobi' clan that Knox fought, but not sure.

Need a name for Draco's Animagus. The thing he was describing was like a precognitive sense, and it bothered him. I did not get to it but it will have some very creepy eyes. Going to be a smaller animal compared to the grim, but bigger than your average wolf.

Need a name for Neville's form as well. Many wanted a bear and similar things, so I think this will work out. Earth based animal, closely aligned in earth magic, almost to an elemental state. Think of a cross between a big dog and a lion, that's dark green, big as a bear.

Next chap, breaking minds, transformations, some more training, and a night on the town (maybe. I know what I want to do, just don't know when it will fit best.)

Hope you enjoyed,

Remember to REVIEW, thanks.

If the chapter was mostly in bold, then it is FF's fault not mine. Only Grimtongue is in bold in my documents, but I've gotten reviews, and seen on the site, that more than half of the chapter was in bold. Sorry about that, but I did not do it. Thanks for telling me though.

Okay, the bold thing got fixed, I had to edit the document using FF's text editor. So hopefully it will show up correctly now.

Last Time...

Other styles are covered in this book, but that is all I will say here as it is the best in our line of work. Once an adequate understanding of breaking into someone's mind is understood and some skill achieved, the next step is creating false memories and distinguishing the memories of others.

Seraph put the book down. He needed to wait for the other two to get to his point before he could really try Legilimencey. Using Dobby briefly crossed his mind, but was discarded when he realized he did not want to know what was in the elf's little head. He would need a victim, a Death Eater preferably, but one of those idiots trying to sell him Bliss would do just as good. Maybe he would test out his Shadow Walking tomorrow.

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## Chapter 16: Mind Games and Transformations

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Seraph thought about it for a moment. He had several hours until he needed to really do anything and he wanted to practice the art. He felt that out of all the things that he would learn, this was one of the most important ones. He checked his watch and saw that he had almost six hours until he needed to do the next step of the potion. He contemplated taking Cheleb with him, but he would be in the way. He gathered his gear, boots, mesh pants, vest, blades, holsters, glasses, tinted black this time and nothing else. He wanted to leave his cloak so that he would not look so suspicious and grabbed an old Hogwarts cloak instead, after tearing off the house patch first. Should he be seen, something that he would like to avoid if at all possible, they would take him for a local hired thug instead of some sort of assassin. He steadied himself; he had not attempted this yet as a human. He looked behind him and saw his shadow, dark but small in the light. He took a step back, willing himself into the shadows and felt his foot sink below the floor. The other leg was next and he slowly sunk into the quickly diminishing shadow.

‘Not to self, using ones shadow is not a good idea, not yet anyway. Must learn how to enter and exit faster.’ He thought to himself as he was lowered into the dark realm. Once he learned how to apparate he would try it here, unless one of the books said that he could not do it for some reason. Moving fast was nice, but traveling longer distances would be better suited to that form of travel and it would be great if he could incorporate the two. A few minutes later he was in the slums again, still unseen. The place was so dark and dirty that he could have easily stepped out of the darkness in the middle of the street as he could a shadow. He pulled the slightly worn hood up and exited the shadow realm behind a pair of hags that had just exited a building. Walking around, he was accosted by a number of characters, none of which suited his needs. He was going to settle for the same Bliss Head that he had thrown into a wall earlier when as luck would have it, he found a perfect -if unwilling- candidate. A Death Eater.

How did he know that the man was a Death Eater, you may ask. Well, the man must not have been particularly smart or he may have been trying to get a shop keeper to give him some better business, but the mark was seen clearly on his arm for a few moments before it was hidden, somewhat. Seraph made his way over to the shop, which was dealing in recently pawned items and took a moment to browse as he kept an eye on his mark. He was surprised to find something of interest, an old, torn, and burnt book entitled ‘Creatures of the night and Myths’. He picked the book up and took it to the shop owner who was still haggling over the price of a Mimic’s eyes. Seraph threw down a galleon, much more then what the book was worth, and walked out, and stood next to the door outside. The man came out with a stupid grin on his face, a small package under his arm. Seraph began to follow him. The Death Eater was about to make another stop when Seraph pulled out his wand discreetly and held it to the man’s neck. He whispered ‘Dormio’, a sleeping spell, point blank which knocked the man out immediately and he dragged the man with him into the shadows. From the time he had taken out his wand to taking the man into the shadows nearly three seconds had passed, no one had seen anything.

Traveling with a passenger in the shadow realm was a bit more difficult but still manageable. He made it back to the ‘Keep’, as he had decided to call it, quickly. Now was as good a time as any to find out



if there were dungeons in the basement and he went down there and exited the shadow realm. He was sure it was pitch black down here but it looked like really low light to him. They were dungeons; sullied cells lined grubby the walls, nearly forty to a side. Chains and other instruments were found along the walls and in boxes outside of the cells. A hole in the corner of the cells made for a crude toilet. It was cold down here and straw made up the beds and thin sheets for blankets. How the chains, sheets, straw, and other numerous things had survived the years of neglect, Seraph did not know. He opened one of the cells and chained the man to the wall, noticing that they seemed to have a self oiling enchantment placed on them. A seat was next to the wall and the man slumped into it, still asleep. Seraph sat in a seat as well and summoned any items he had on him (the small package and a wand) and banished the man's clothes before he woke the man up.

"Wha? Where am I?" The man asked in a bit of a panic. Waking up naked chained to a wall would freak anyone one out. Seraph threw the sheet that was in the cell at him and the man regained his cool quickly, and sneered. "You had better let me go, or the Dark Lord will not be pleased."

"Right, I doubt that Riddle will give a shit about a low ranking slum rat like you." Seraph told the man.

"Riddle? I work for the Dark Lord! He will kill you, as he does any who stand in his way. And if he does not, I will kill you, slowly, painfully. You will scream for mercy and beg death for when I am through with you!" The idiot screamed and Seraph silenced him. He changed his eyes to the same reflective silver he had used on the bartender and the Malfoy's and took his shades off. The man started to shudder. The only person he had ever seen with eyes like that was the Dark Lord, only his weren't silver or reflective, but red and fiery. These eyes looked like they were made out of the actual precious metal but seemed like liquid when they moved.

"I am growing tired of this. Now, the reason you are here is for the betterment of my education, lucky you. There is a skill that I am interested in learning, but I don't have anyone to practice on." The man shuddered again, thinking of a time when he spoke out of line

before the Dark Lord. "No, not the torture curse, though I suppose I will learn that one eventually as well. Hopefully you will see to that as well. No, I wish to see your mind, and if you can stop me, all the better." Seraph told him. He pulled out his wand.

"Legilimens!" He shouted, remembering what the book had told him. His new Occlumency training came into effect as he was able to have a greater concentration as he pushed all the power he could into the spell as he looked in the man's fearful eyes. Seraph understood immediately why concentration was needed as soon as his probe entered the man's mind. You could actually see the mindscape within your mind, but you saw through your own eyes at the same time. It was very confusing having your vision split between two things. Even with his concentration born from Occlumency, he doubted that he could enter someone's mind and hold a simple conversation at the same time. The power that he used sent him plowing through the man's weak defenses like they were wet paper. The man screamed as his protections were torn down from within his mind. The mind was fairly organized and Seraph began to sort through his memories, not really looking for anything. The man had begun to try and push him out, but it was more like a child trying to push an adult, Seraph did not budge. He knew what he wanted to see now.

'What would he want enemies to not know?' He concentrated as hard as he could on the thought and felt himself pulled to a small and slightly hidden group of memories. His marking, the pain (though Seraph did not feel it, the man did if his screams were anything to go by), his initiation which was killing and then raping a young girl, killing various hags for the practice, a few old Death Eater raids and a recent meeting. Seraph smirked as he watched Lucius getting tortured for not having enough money, cringe as a house-elf was blown to pieces. It seemed that Lestrage was dead. He wasn't sure if he should be happy or angered at this information. Neville would probably be pissed though. He watched in morbid fascination as a man's skin was peeled away, then his muscles, his bones broken and his intestines fall out over the floor. He decided that he had enough looking through these memories for the moment and pulled out.

He felt a bit disoriented for a moment, maybe a bit tired, but otherwise fine. The man, named Bog, was another matter entirely. If it wasn't for

the chains he would be sprawled out on the ground. Instead the man was clutching his head, tears streaming down his face, mouth open as if in a silent scream, which Seraph realized was a silenced scream as the charm was still on him. He was not sure how long he had been in the man's mind, but he still had close to five hours left before the potion needed the next step, so he took out the 'Ritual' book and began to read in his study, noting that the other two were still in a deep trance. Several hours later he had done the next step of the potion and was engrossed in the ritual book. He felt very light headed from the reading though, because as he would read, his affinity for rituals and runes would give him more information on things in the book and make everything very clear. It was worth the slight headache though, as he knew that he would probably never need to read or relearn the material in the book once he was done with it due to his Occlumency, which along with everything else, made remembering permanent and easy. Rituals were about a sacrifice for a gain. Bigger the sacrifice, the bigger the gain, or at least that is what you hope. Every ritual was different, and sometimes could be done in variations, like doing to rituals of a three ritual set together. It made the set a little bit stronger, though there was much more pain involved. Blood runes were sometimes needed to be placed at places on the body through Ritual blades, which charged the body with rune magic at the cost of blood. Druidic, Runic, Ancient Egyptian, and even Grimtongue could be used in the ritual to draw out the magic of one's self and the chamber. Grimtongue was incorporated into some of the rituals to insure that no one but a Black or member of the Guild could do it. The chants directed the ritual and were usually only used in rituals involving life sacrifice. Other runes were to be drawn in magic, sometimes blood, or sometimes potions around the body to either protect the room or reduce magical backlash. Sometimes runes made from potions were connected to runes on the body and magic was transferred from one to the other. The more advanced rituals could last days, no food or drink with heavy blood loss and extreme fatigue, making them very difficult.

The potion had just been completed when Draco broke out of his self induced trance. He threw up on the floor and quickly cleaned it up.

“Had fun?” Seraph asked, only to receive a glare. “Be happy, the potion is done.” Draco did brighten a little at the prospect of becoming an Animagus, but he still looked sick.

“How far did you get?” Seraph asked as he bottled two doses and went to wake up Neville.

“I’m done, I think. Took a while, but it was easy, once I got past a few...things.” Draco said. Seraph nodded and looked directly into his eyes as he handed him a dose. The probe slipped into Draco’s mind with a little more difficulty than it had with the prisoner. Had Draco been better at detecting mind intrusions, he would have immediately felt the probe, but he was not and did not feel it. Seraph looked around, making sure he did not appear distracted to Draco as he asked him what he thought the name of his form was. Draco’s mindscape was a large and open forest, not unlike his, just different a bit brighter and the trees were thinner. A cloudless sky was above and the sun was setting. ‘What does he not want me to know?’ Was the probe’s quest after he took stock of the mindscape. He felt a slight pull towards the woods and he followed it until he reached the tree line. A shadow was cast by the tree and he pushed himself through it. It was like pushing through quick sand, but he made it inside of the shadow and continued to follow the source of the pull. He quickly came to a large castle in a deep valley. A large moat surrounded the castle and the start of what could have been the groundwork for some protective wards. He slipped in through a shadow from the inside. There were many different doors that were labeled one thing or another but he followed the pull to a large set of double doors labeled ‘Father’. He exited the shadows and opened the door slightly and walked in. Like wizard portraits he saw the memories playing out in front of him. One in particular caught his eye; it was of Lucius hitting Draco with the Cruciatus and an advanced bludgeoning curse. It changed into a small Draco being beaten for losing to another boy in a dueling tournament that took place out of the country some time ago. If he had touched the memory he was sure that Draco would feel it and he decided to pull out of Draco’s mind.

Seraph was amazed at how fast he found what he was looking for when he realized that Draco was answering him.

“... know, some sort of wolf though.” Seraph nodded and pulled out the book he had gotten earlier.

“Hopefully both of your forms will be in here.” Seraph told him as he handed him the book and Neville a dose. “And you’re not done, Draco.”

“What do you mean?” Draco asked as he dripped the blood into his goblet.

“Your mind, it needs better protection. Nice castle though, very Hogwarts.” He told the pale boy who was going paler.

“You were in my mind!” He demanded.

“Yes, you said you were done, so I wanted to test your mind. I’m not very good, but I was able to get through and find your castle, take a look around, and get out without you knowing.”

“But, no wand, or incantation...” The boy said.

“No, there wasn’t. They help in gathering power for an intrusion, but they are not always needed. If you want to be technical, I suppose that the eyes are used as a focus. And it is not advisable to tell someone that you are about to invade their mind if you want to find anything. What I did was just a style of Legilimencey, a very efficient style.” Seraph told him. “And don’t worry; I doubt I was the first one to be in your mind without your knowing. Hogwarts’ Headmaster and the Potions master are both masters of the arts.” Seraph told him, and both Neville and Draco paled a bit further.

“But enough of that. Here, drink.” He commanded. Neville dripped the blood into his goblet and drank as Draco took a large gulp of the potion. At first, nothing happened, but after a few moments, Neville’s hair began to lengthen further and turn a dark brown before it went green. Draco’s platinum hair grew a bit thicker and turned a bit more grey and silver before a muzzle shot out of his face. Neville’s hair continued to grow and become wilder with each passing moment and his legs began to change. Large bear like paws grew from his hands

and his legs and arms took on a greenish hue. Neville fell down around this time and hit his large nose on the floor. Draco's skin began to sprout short, thick silvery hair that took the place of his clothing as he too fell, his back elongating and changing rapidly. Neville let out a barking roar as a long tail sprouted out of his nearly completed form as Draco stood up on his newly acquired legs. The last thing to change on Draco was his eyes. The silvery grey eyes that the boy had slowly turned a deep pitch black. The black spread until it covered his entire eye. The black took on a glazed, icy look as a small swirl began to appear in the center. The blue vortex had a center point and two swirling arms, making it look a whirlwind.

The transformed Neville and Draco looked at each other. Neville did look like a lion from the wild mane, but the body was that of a dog, not unlike the grim and similar in size. If Seraph had to hazard a guess, he would say that it was another product of the Guild. Draco looked like a very large dark silver wolf, and while not nearly as large as Neville, he looked like an animal you hope to never see. The wolves eyes seemed to glow for a moment and it turned around in time to see a small green dog pop into existence. Draco began to growl and Seraph quickly turned into a grim and jumped in between the two. Draco stared into Seraph's eyes in a challenging way while Neville watched the by play intently. By nature they were all alphas, and Draco was challenging Seraph for the position. Neville walked behind Seraph and sat on his large haunches, choosing a side. Draco did not seem to get the hint and Seraph lowered his shoulders and spiked the hair on the back of his neck, making him look larger than he was and growled deeply. The growl was not very loud, but was deep enough to shake the room and Draco backed down by taking a single step back. The meaning was clear though, especially to the canine part of their personalities; this was not over. It was at that point that Draco collapsed and returned to his human form. The boy had changed a bit, his hair was longer and now the same dark silver as his animal form and he had gained noticeable muscle mass.

"How does it feel?" Seraph asked Neville. Neville stood up and inspected a paw. Now that Seraph could see it better the paw looked more feline in nature than canine. Large black claws extended from the paw and Neville took an experimental swipe. Satisfied with his

claws, the green animal braced itself and let out a might roar that held a growling undertone. Neville smiled before answering.

“Perfect...” He managed to say before he too collapsed. After Neville had collapsed, Seraph inspected his own paws for the first time and noticed that his too looked feline, from the bottom at least. He flexed the appendage and was a little surprised when he saw large silver six inch claws spring from the padding of his paw. They looked like blades, actually, and Seraph wondered how he could not have noticed them before. He vowed that he would learn to use them properly though.

Of anyone, Seraph and Draco and Neville, Neville had the most noticeable change. His hair, which had been slightly long, had grown to past bottom of his neck, and was just as wild as his animal’s mane. The light brown that it was before had grown darker to a muddy brown with deep green highlights. His face sported a very short but shaggy looking beard. Whatever his animal was, it was obviously strong as the slightly chubby boy’s fat turned into muscle, and then some, making him look bigger then Seraph. The teen looked like a beast and Seraph knew that Hogwarts would not recognize him as the meek and chubby boy he was before summer, hell, before three days ago. Dobby and Winky put the two passed out boys in their beds and Seraph went to sleep himself.

The next morning dawned and Seraph got up early and had a swim in his pond, thinking that a ritual to allow him to breathe underwater might be useful. He got out after a while and headed down for breakfast to find Draco already awake and eating and Neville coming in behind him. Neville was nearly bouncing in his seat and Draco, Draco was Draco, only he wanted a good steak this morning.

“What’s gotten you in such a mood, Longbottom?” Draco asked. His tone was not condescending, just drawling. Seraph looked up and noticed that the boy’s pupils had the same swirling pattern to them that his Animagus form did. It was not extremely noticeable as they stayed the same color, but it was there nonetheless.

“I need to run, I need to lift, do something. Seraph, you can fight, when will you teach us?” Neville asked, taking a break from eating.

“Depends on how much your transformation changed you. If you can run for a few miles then your endurance should be enough. Strength is useful in fighting, but not absolutely necessary, so you can still lift, though I’m not sure if you’re going to need to anymore. I’ve got some dummies that will teach us how to fight correctly. I have a certain... knack for it, so I may learn easier and can help you two if you need it.” Seraph told them. They finished breakfast quickly after that and headed towards the ‘Ghost Room’. The first thing that Neville did was to go to the weights. He sat under the bench that Seraph had used the day before and lifted. The bar barely resisted before the weight was lifted, again, and again and finally he threw the weight up into the air and caught it. Neville got up and grinned.

“Looks like I have that covered.” He told them. Seraph just shook his head.

“Let’s race.” Draco said suddenly. The other two nodded and got into position. Seraph counted to three and they ran. Neville kept up with the other two for about a mile but then began to slow down and eventually dropped out of the little race. Draco and Seraph held strong though, neck to neck.

“Your pretty fast, Draco.” Seraph told the person running next to him, but then grinned. “But I’m still faster.” He told him and pushed himself harder. If Draco had ever seen a car in fourth gear peel out into fifth, or a jet put on its afterburners, then that is what he would have described as happening. But he had never seen those things. Draco let out a feral growl and ran as fast as he could, catching up to Seraph after a minute, but the Black was still ahead. In mid stride Draco turned into his wolf and blasted past Seraph on four legs. Seraph tried to run faster, but he wasn’t a match for the wolf and only caught up to him when they had to stop or hit the wall.

“Think you got me beat?” Seraph asked Draco, who growled an affirmative. “Let’s see how you feel on the way back.” Seraph said as he turned into a grim. Draco did not look perturbed by the change, if anything he looked more confident. How could such a large animal move faster than him? There was no countdown this time. Seraph simply said ‘Go’. Draco’s form was fast, very fast. As a matter of fact,



if the Grim did not have the aid of the partial shadow realm, the wolf would indeed be faster. But Seraph did have the shadow realm to help and smoked the wolf Animagus from the first word.

The two slid to a stop in front of the weight machines and changed back.

“What the hell? How are you faster then me?” Draco asked in disbelief. His form was fast, unnaturally so, and the animal knew it and used it at every opportunity. To be beaten by the alpha in an informal challenge bothered him.

“Just am, perks of the form, just like yours. You’ll get faster if you train, we all will. The dummies are over here, come on.” Seraph said, pointing the things out.

“Okay,” Seraph started when they reached the human looking dummies. Knowing how Vulcan seemed to make everything about the dummies thorough, he was sure that the dummies were anatomically correct and was glad that he did not have to cover the things up himself. “These are dummies. Animated human like things that can be programmed for various tasks like fighting, protection, teaching, you get the picture. These, unlike others if you have ever seen them, are life like in every way besides actually being alive. They can breathe, talk, though it is very limited, probably eat too. The most important thing about them, besides the programming, is that their structures are that of a human, every bone, organ and blood vessel. This means that we can practice on these dummies and see the actual effects of the human body without severing someone’s limb or burning someone to practice you’re healing-” Seraph was interrupted by Neville.

“So that’s how you did it...” But he trailed off at the look Seraph gave him. Draco looked at them oddly but did not comment. Seraph continued.

“They are set for weapons, spell, and martial combat. Hit them a couple of times and it will gauge your strength and work up to your skill level and should settle to just above yours. Its spell knowledge is limited right now but its combat should be very good. Pick one and

let's start." Seraph told them after he finished explaining. The boys levitated their chosen dummy out to the field and spread out.

Seraph stood his dummy up and looked at it. "Vulcan never said how to start the thing." He thought out loud. The dummy that he had used the last time was already activated. The dummy came to life as he said 'start' and took position. Seraph punched it as hard as he could in the chest and the dummy slid back a few feet, leaving a trail to where it stopped. It did not fall though and walk back to in front of Seraph. He dropped into a natural position and gave the dummy as hard and as fast a kick to its head as he could. The dummies jaw hung loose after that but it did not move any more then that. Seraph was about to hit it again when it got into the same position Seraph was in.

It made the first move, a punch to his head which Seraph dodged without any trouble. The next punch came faster, followed by a kick to the side, both of which Seraph barely dodged and gave a punch to the side in retaliation. The dummy started to move faster after that, giving one or two punch and kick combos until Seraph could not dodge them any more and had to block them or jump back a bit. He saw the moves coming at him, and he knew what they were, what they were supposed to do, and where they were supposed to hit and the information started flooding his brain. Unrelated knowledge on different katas and fighting forms battled for his concentration. Even with this new found knowledge, he was barely avoiding being hit and was only able to give a couple in return. He jumped back and concentrated on the dummy, looking for the colored lines and spots that appeared on the body to help him, and they appeared, though it was very weak. He let out a primal growl as the world slowed down around him and he charged. His first two hits were blocked, but a kick to the knee sounded like he shattered its knee cap and it moved slower, barely. Evidently pain was not a factor for this thing. He threw a punch to the head that was blocked and received the other knee to his chest which sent him sprawling back. A couple of ribs felt like they were broken. He continued on through the pain, and jumped up, landing a powerful kick to its head that he was able to use as a platform to jump off of and managed to land on his feet, nearly ten feet away. The hit knocked the dummy's head into the ground harshly, making a small crater. The dummy got up, a bit slower this time, and

came after him. Seraph was in pain now and had had enough. He watched the thing come after him as if in slow motion and blocked a punch, grabbed its fist and spun it around and punched the small of its back with as much force as he could. From what he could see, the lines in its back flashed red and turned black. It fell to the ground and did not move. Well, its neck tried to move, but that was about it.

Seraph just stared at the thing as time sped up, and the pain he felt in his ribs nearly doubled, as well as a multitude of bruises, cuts, and scrapes that he had not felt when fighting. The other two joined him a few minutes later and looked at the dummy as well.

“What did you do to it?” Neville asked, his now gruffer voice ringing oddly across the field. He sported a black eye, a limp, and what looked like a broken arm.

“Looks dead.” Draco commented. Draco looked like he came out of a fight with a cat for all of the cuts he had across his face. The boy spat out some blood and nursed his arm as he stared at the thing.

“I think I paralyzed it. I punched it in the lower back and I think I broke its spine. Instant quadriplegic.” Seraph told them. “How did you guys get them to stop?” Seraph asked.

“I broke its legs.” Neville said proudly. “I think that their bodies are attuned to our strength as well because I should have torn its legs off with how hard I hit them.” Neville told them. Draco nodded.

“I told it to stop.” Draco said simply and Seraph could have hit himself. Dobby popped in at that moment and nearly passed out at the sight of them and popped out, promising to bring his water and Winky, as she could heal better than him. A few moments later the two were back and the three boys were made to lie on the ground. Winky tended to Seraph first, and he found out that the rib had nearly punctured a lung and got his various other cuts taken care of. Neville did have a broken arm, as well as a dislocated shoulder and a severe bruise on one leg. Draco had a broken nose, jaw, arm, and some internal bleeding which took the longest to heal out of all of them. The dummies were tended to as well. Draco’s had a cracked skull, and while not necessarily fatal, it would have been excruciatingly painful.

Neville's did indeed have two broken legs, well, more like pulverized legs as the bones had been broken several times. Seraph's had a broken spinal chord and several severed nerves which took a while to fix, as well as a cracked skull, a broken jaw, broken knee cap, and a fractured sternum. Winky was exhausted by the time she was done.

"Well, that was fun." Seraph commented as they made their way to his study.

"Sweet Merlin, Black, how the hell do you call that fun?" Draco asked.

"Ever heard the saying 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger'? Well, you learn from whatever you survive, and hopefully your opponent won't have learned the lesson and you can take them down. The two of you were just winging it, like being thrown into a fight. We'll set them to teaching mode the next time." Seraph said.

"What about you, Seraph. I saw you fighting for a few moments, you were blow for blow. It was hard to follow actually."

"I did okay, I think. It was hard to concentrate on the fight when I was being forced to learn at the same time." Seraph said.

"That certain 'knack' you mentioned earlier?" Draco asked, and Seraph nodded.

"I think your right though, Neville. There must be another mode that makes it like the average human. I doubt anyone, outside of vampires and werewolves would be able to take a hit from you and not have at least a broken bone or something. It's like it expects us to be unbreakable because you hit it hard enough to kill it. I'll look into the programming later, maybe I can change some settings." Seraph told them. Neville began to meditate at once and Draco took his own version of the Occlumency book, going into a trance every once in a while to do something or other. Seraph looked through his book as well, reading over the creation of false memories and how to distinguish between real and not. Creating false memories looked simple enough, you had to make the memory with as much detail as possible. The book said that there were ways to imbue the memories with magic that made the viewer think that it was real. That magic

was what a Legilimens had to see past. To a strong Legilimens, a fake memory would appear blurry and surreal. The best way to distinguish would be practice though, so he would either have to wait for the other two to reach his level or find someone very accomplished in the mind arts. He had nearly completed the book but he had not read anything about duplicating or implanting memories like Vulcan had mentioned doing to the dummies.

Over the next few days Neville broke a couple of weight machines and finished sorting his memories. Seraph put up a recognition ward and an intrusion ward. He may have overdone it as he passed out for two days after charging them. Draco had added a few defenses and decided to increase the charge gradually, as he did not want to be out for days. Seraph finished reading the information on the rituals that he wanted to do and gave the book to Draco and Neville to look at if they wanted. They both decided they wanted to do a few of the ones that Seraph planned on doing, and they all decided to add the sleep reducing ritual. When looking through the advanced book Seraph found a ritual that would allow the body to heal itself faster as well as a underwater ritual and decided he wanted to do them after the maturation ritual. There had been a slight confrontation when Draco realized that Dobby was his former house elf, but it had been resolved quickly when Dobby threatened to have Winky stop feeding him, and amazingly, it worked. Narcissa had been having her meals served in her room for nearly a week and she seemed to want to keep it that way. Seraph was sure that Draco visited her at night. The prisoner had been brought up to the study and used as practice for Legilimency. Neville had objected to it until he took a look into the man's mind himself. After that he did not have a problem. Between them, Seraph seemed to be the strongest at it and Neville the weakest, though the boy's reluctance to invade another's mind may have held him back. Seraph had been browsing through the Archives and found out about the 'Blood Call' which acted as a sort of summons that he could use when he started the Guild up again. They would be starting the schedule that Seraph had drawn up soon.

Draco had found out that his form was called an Ancened Draug they were animals of insight and Seraph learned why he did not get killed when fighting the dummy without any experience in fighting. Those wolves were of a mythical nature, actually of an Elfish nature, they

were some of the few things left when the High Elves disappeared and sometimes called 'Seer Wolves'. They did not see the future as some thought, but they sensed things at times, like imminent danger or an opportunity, sometimes whether or not someone was trustworthy. This had transferred to his human form and he made sure to dodge any blows that he knew were coming.

Neville had found his animal as well. The creature had many names; usually called a Kemenrawhu, or an Earth Liondog. To others it was called a Terra Demon and the Green or Nature's Patronus. Unlike what Seraph thought, they were not by products of the Guild. After he learned about what they were though, he wondered if the Guild had tried to emulate the animal in their creation of the Grim. They were actually very strong and protective animals that guarded forests, rumored to have also been creatures created by the elves to protect them. They were extremely loyal to their forest and were born, lived, and died there. Besides being amazingly strong animals, they had an affinity to the earth and could help things grow. When it was needed, they could summon vines out of the earth to bind something or throw large stones at their enemies.

Seraph was working on a runes book when he was interrupted by the floo.

"Seraph, you there?" Vulcan asked.

"Yeah, what can I do for you?"

"There has been an attack, and your friend wants to speak to you."

"Send him through. I think he would be interested in the way things are going." Seraph told him. A few moments later Remus Lupin was spat out of the large hearth that was in his study. The man wore his new cloak and looked very tired. He was offered a seat and given some of Dobby's magic water, something the elf would not tell him how it was made, and Seraph was beginning to believe that maybe it should stay that way. Remus drank and thanked the elf, looking a bit more revived after it.

"So what's been going on?" Seraph asked. Remus sighed.

“Azkaban was attacked and taken. Every guard and Auror present was eliminated. Every prisoner that would not join them were killed and placed on a raft and set on fire. The raft was sent across the water to London and the muggles saw it, so now they are scared of a group of sadistic terrorists, which they should. The muggles seem to know more about it then most wizards do as Fudge has been downplaying that part. He refuses to believe that V-voldemort had anything to do with it. He told the papers that they were a group of supporters of a lost cause that broke into Azkaban with inside help. The man has stained the names of countless men and women because he refuses to see the truth.” He sighed again and rubbed the bridge of his nose.

“We had no prior warning and once we knew about it, it was already over. Snape was brewing at the time and found out at about the same moment as us, apparently. Dumbledore is going spare, what with the loss of his two pawns so close together. He was rather upset, as in the man performed accidental magic, when we returned without Neville, and refused to believe that we did not know where he was or that he left of his volition. Had to speak with Neville’s grandmother before he would believe us that he was a legal adult. He was going to have him placed as a missing person and alert the nation and he threatened to throw all of us out of the order. So now he has half of the Order looking to bring him back in and the other half is trying to figure out what happened at Azkaban. From what Snape can tell us, Voldemort has chosen a second, calls him ‘Imperator’, Latin; means was his first real test after being chosen. Snape doesn’t know who it is and we don’t have any other spies working for the Order at the moment.” Remus finished looking just as tired as he did coming in.

“Azkaban, the island fortress, probably more protected then Hogwarts, was taken? Who ever this guy is, he must be seriously powerful, maybe as strong as ol’ Voldie himself. Do you guys have an estimate of how many followers he gained?” Seraph asked.

“Well, a log is kept at the Ministry of how many guards, nurses, Aurors, and prisoners are there at any point in time. The Ministry knew of the attack for nearly twenty minutes before an alert was sent out. The monitor has since disappeared. About eighty Death Eaters

and the General killed close to 100 members of the staff, 170 prisoners, and the Head Warden. They gained the Dementors and about 300 new Death Eaters from imprisoned ranks and new, opportunistic, prisoners. From that alone, HE has a force nearly as large as he did in the first war. I think that he will be revealing himself soon."

"Maybe Fudge is a Death Eater." Seraph thought aloud.

"That's what a few of us think. Dumbledore thinks that the man is just incompetent and that it is too dangerous to have him removed. Too much political maneuvering to have a vote of no confidence and the power vacuum afterwards may suck a more voiced Death Eater into the position and we would be worse off then where we started." Remus told him sadly. Seraph thought about it for a moment.

"And Dumbledore doesn't think that there is anyone who could take the position? He couldn't push someone's political agenda a little faster? Being backed by the Old Man should still be worth something, besides being a pawn. Unless Fudge is somehow serving Dumbles by doing what he is doing somehow. Fudge denies, denies, denies, and Dumbledore tells the world something that they don't want to hear. He takes a slight public opinion drop, but the man has always been 'crazy' so people won't think ill of him for too long. Once Fudge is proved wrong, when there is absolutely no doubt that Voldemort is back, then Dumbledore looks like the wise old man the people love so much. Public opinion shoots up and he can push whoever he wants into the Minister position with no objection, as opposed to the fight he might get at the moment." Seraph said, more like thinking out loud then speaking to Remus, who now was looking at Seraph with his mouth open.

"Sorry, did you say something?" Seraph asked when he saw Remus.

"No, but what you said, it makes sense. It would explain why Dumbledore does not want to remove Fudge. Going off of that, he would want someone from the Order to fill the position. There are not many with political backgrounds there so there would be a lot of objections from House as well as the Wizengamot... yes, with so many people thinking highly of him again, he could put anyone he



wanted in there, regardless of background.” Remus nodded as he continued to think. As Remus was thinking, Seraph was looking at him intently. The man’s aura was chaotic, fighting itself. A soft but dark brown fought valiantly with a dirty green. It was like watching a yin and yang, but not even close to the calm serenity that the symbol would usually make one think of. It was the wolf and the human magic fighting each other, and the effects were evident. Seraph realized that as the green slowly grew stronger, he could actually smell the wolf.

‘The full moon must be close.’ Seraph thought to himself. It was at that moment that Draco and Neville walked in. Neville greeted Remus, who did a double take at the boy’s new appearance, and took a seat while looking at the Occlumency book, he felt he was ready for Legilimency. Draco stopped when he saw Remus though. Remus looked up and a wave of intense sadness crossed his face.

“I’m not.” Draco told him, and Seraph and Neville gave him an odd look as Remus looked confused.

“But, you smell like you’ve been bitten.” Remus pressed.

“No, just an Animagus. Magical wolf.” Draco told him.

“Remus, if you could not tell, this is Draco Malfoy. Draco, I hope that sharing a similarity to the man can help you in dropping prejudices.” Seraph said as a way of introduction. Remus looked mildly surprised at finding out that the man before him was Malfoy, they looked similar in certain respects but he would not have thought that was who he was. He was surprised further when the loudest child voice to get him kicked out of Hogwarts shook his hand.

“It has.” Draco said. Seraph told the two what was going on and Remus told Neville that he had spoken to his grandmother and assured her that he was in an adequately protected home.

“Okay, Remus. How are your shields?” Seraph asked as Remus took a bite of a biscuit offered by Winky.

“Getting better, I have always had good natural protection because I’m a werewolf, one of the few perks. Makes it harder to increase the protection though. Why?” Remus asked.

“Because, I want you to know what’s going on. You know that I’m training, and that Neville was joining me. I had a meeting, sort of, with Draco and his mother. They were both in a tight spot, so I’m helping them out. Draco decided to join the training as well, and I haven’t seen Narcissa for almost a week now. This place that you’re in is part of a very large estate known as the ‘Black Alley’. This is my study, part of my quarters I call ‘The Keep’. The Keep was originally used as barracks of sorts.” Seraph started out, and took a drink of Dobby’s water.

“For what?” Remus asked.

“For a group of people with similar skills and interests. A guild, the Grim’s Guild. They were assassins, thieves, and sometimes mercenaries. I mentioned a ritual at Grimmuald, it was the ritual that created the Black, as well as many others, line. Certain gifts and affinities were passed through the blood of these families since their beginning. The first Black was the son of the Guild’s Master Assassin, and all the families that descend from members of the Guild are connected by blood law. I plan on reforming this Guild sometime in the future to fight Voldemort from the shadows. They were assassins, and I plan on keeping it that way. With the Ministry and the Order distracting the Death Eaters, hopefully we will be able to take them out and no one will be any the wiser. I’m telling you this, as I will tell the twins, Moody, and Tonks, because I want you to help me when the time comes. None of you need to do any fighting if you don’t want. I want the twins to work on tools, and Moody and you to help teach the members. The call is always within the generation, and Tonks will be the oldest member to be blood called. Any older, like the parents of the members, won’t feel it. I’m not sure why it is like that, maybe so there is not a large age difference or for safety. What I am saying is that they will barely be out or still in school. I don’t plan on doing the call until school starts up again, won’t have to explain so many missing people and gives Draco, Neville, and I a chance to improve ourselves.” Seraph finished. Remus looked at him and then the other two.

“Your own side indeed.” Was all Remus said with a smile. “I’ll tell the others if you want and I may take up your offer soon. Things are getting heated at Headquarters and I’m not sure how much longer I want to be a part of it. I’m only useful there so that I can get the werewolves on our side, but I don’t think that I can. They don’t respect those who haven’t accepted the ‘gift’ as they call it. They side with Greyback because he is a strong werewolf. They are packs, and he is a major Alpha. Greyback is more of a mercenary for Voldemort. I’m not sure why he follows him either. Greyback wants a world full of werewolves, and Voldemort wants to rule the world, a ‘pure’ world, and while he may want to ally with the werewolves, they don’t fit that doctrine. Maybe he was promised a piece of it, I don’t know. I’ll help you though, I loved teaching and to do so again would be great.” Remus told him.

“Thanks, Remus. There was something that I read recently in the Archives that mentioned werewolves. I’ll have to read more on it but I think I can help you with your problem. It’s not a cure, but it might help with your transformations.” Seraph told him. Remus was grateful all the same and told him anything that would help him would be appreciated. He left a short while later; he had to get back to the ‘search’ for Neville.

Seraph tested Neville’s shields and broke through fairly easily, though Neville had put up a detection ward and knew when his mind had been intruded. Seraph was eventually pushed out, but he found Neville’s memories first. Seraph’s ‘shields’ were tested as well. He felt a siren like growl within his mind that told him that there was another presence inside. Another ward told him that it was ‘Draconis Lucius Malfoy’ who had intruded his mind. With this warning Seraph quickly delved into his core and then his mind and could actually watch Malfoy in his search. Malfoy waited for a moment, as if expecting to be thrown out, and then looked around. He was a bit shaky in his movements, having never traveled in the shadow realm, but soon took off through the woods to get to the mountain. Seraph followed him from behind and nearly laughed when Draco was nearly bitten by one of his puppy guardians. Draco made it past a large portion of the woods when Seraph decided that Draco had been in there long enough and pushed with everything he had.

As Seraph had been sorting his mind and setting the wards, he thought that the gift that he had been given, the connection between mind and magic, had already been activated since it did not tire him out as much as he thought it would. He was wrong. Throwing someone out of his mind must have been the final catalyst as he felt extremely lightheaded. He pulled out of his mind and watched as the veins that connected his core to his mind grow, almost doubling in size and turned an nearly ethereal silver. Black flames began to climb up the veins until they were covered and then entered his mind. Seraph quickly followed them and was amazed as a huge black phoenix made of fire bowed to him and exploded, showering fire into the sky. The phoenix wasn't gone though, the fire had settled into the trees and clouds, hidden, until it was needed to protect his mind.

Seraph pulled out to see that Draco was sprawled out on the floor, clutching his head while unconscious. He was quickly enervated.

"What the hell was that, Black? One moment I'm trying to get past those damn dogs and the next I feel like I've been hit in the head with a bludgeoning curse!" Draco complained, as he rubbed his head. "I was almost to that mountain too."

"You were no where near that mountain Draco. As a matter of fact, you only made it as far as you did because I allowed it. I knew when and who was in my mind the moment you entered. Benefit of over charged mind wards, I suppose. I was following you, actually. Saw you liked my patrol. If you liked them, then you'll love what just was activated in my mind." Seraph told him with a smirk.

"A gift activated? And I had to be the first one on the receiving end, thanks a lot. What was it, natural Occlumency or something?" Draco asked.

"Greater connection between mind and magic. Supposed to give a slight natural defense, as well as protecting my mind from the taint of the Dark Arts. Vulcan told me that it was not a rare thing, just a forgotten one, so it may be possible you and Neville will have it as well, and if not, I'm sure you can increase the connection after the ritual." Seraph told him. Draco nodded thoughtfully and was about to

look at the Mind Arts book for more tips on Legilimencey when he asked Seraph something.

“What was the natural defense?” Draco asked, not sure what could be worse then those blasted grims that haunted the boy’s mind. They were fast, and he was going to have to look into transforming into his wolf once inside a mind.

“An old friend.” Seraph told him.

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“You were successful... this pleases me greatly, Severus. I did not expect you to be able to take the island. It seems your skills stretch further then the field of potions... We will be abandoning the Manor soon in favor of the Fortress you have acquired for us. How many prisoners were killed?” The snake faced man asked.

“Close to two hundred chose not to accept your gracious offer, my Lord.” Severus, or the General as he was called in battle. The two were in a closed room and Severus had removed the silver mask that he had been presented before his presentation before the assembled Death Eaters. His identity had not been given when he was named the ‘Imperator’. Outside of the inner circle, there was a hierarchy based on dueling skill and magical power. When one wished to rise to another rank, they would first have to defeat the person who was in that rank. Even if they managed to win, if they were not deemed useful enough, they may not get the rank, as Voldemort decided the final outcome. Sometimes they would be tortured or killed for wishing to challenge their master’s decision of their placement, and therefore his authority. Several had wished to challenge this new General, but after the first challenger was levitated and had each appendage systematically obliterated until only the head was left, no one wished to challenge him.

“Fools. Placing all of the bodies on a burning platform and sending it to the muggles was a nice touch, I must admit.” Voldemort told him.

“Thank you, my lord. I aim to-” But Snape was cut off.

“Crucio!” The crimson eyed man spat. Snape fell to his knee but did not scream, he was above the common man now, and screaming would show his master that he was weak. Weakness was a mortal’s flaw, and he wished to prove that he had none.

“But I did not tell you to do it. I have a mission for you, Severus. The collaboration between us and the Werewolves is... tentative at best. Fenrir may be the leader of the packs, but he is incredibly stupid and sadistic, better suited for a grunt. He has managed to survive on his strength alone for many years and carries a lot of sway over the packs that he does not directly lead. I want you to create a permanent imperious potion that will be able to penetrate and fight through the werewolves mind and magic. Once this war is over, they will be eliminated, but for the moment, they are needed, and I do not wish to lose the use of them because their leader has decided to change his mind. Especially as the Vampires remain elusive.” Voldemort told him as he watched his servant and second in command stand up shakily.

“It will be done.” Snape told him and bowed. Voldemort waited for the man to make a move to leave, but he did not, and he smirked. At least one of his servants had a brain.

“You are dismissed, Severus. Do not disappoint me.” Snape bowed again and left, intent on reworking the formula for the imperious potion. It would be difficult, but the potential uses of an inescapable Imperious Potion were limitless. The potion was of his own design, made during his Master’s first rise to power. It was based off of the Entrapment Bond Potion, a potion he had made for Dumbledore on a few occasions.

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“Where am I, and who are you?” Draco demanded. He was in a large chair made out of some sort of soft stone, large and hard but comfortable. It reminded him of a throne almost. There was a large bench in front of him that reminded him of the courtroom that his father had been present in when they had gathered the Lords of the old families a few years back. He had been able to be present as an

Heir, but not allowed to participate. In the seats that looked like a pair of Judge's Benches, there were two men. Next to them and off to the side sat an old man who looked like his grandfather, only much, much older. On the other side there was an old woman that he did not recognize at all. He wondered briefly if he was on trial for something until he looked up and saw the sky and stars. They were not in a room, but a large grassy plain.

"Do you not know why you are here? I believe that you were forewarned." A gruff but serpentine voice said to him. He looked at them for a moment, and then to his grandfather, or more likely an ancestor of his from a time long past.

"Yes, I was. I apologize." Draco said, probably the most humble thing that had ever come out of his mouth.

"State your name, and title." One of the two men who sat at the highest chair demanded.

"Draconis Lucius Malfoy, Head of the Malfoy Family, titled Lord of the house." Draco told them, succeeding in keeping his voice from wavering too much.

"Welcome, Heir of Malfoy. While your father's family was not part of the original Guild, your mother's blood runs through you strong, making you a Black as much as any other in the family. I am known as Knox. Besides me is my son, Meissa, the first Black. We preside over every Right of Choice for our Heir's and for the Heir's of the descendants of the Guild for their right of choice. The man that you see to the side is an ancestor of yours, a man named Mailloche MalFoi, one of the original Malfoys. The woman on the other side is Natalie Cranque, a relative who wished to be here. They will be helping with the proceedings." Knox told him.

"So, Lord Malfoy, you have a choice ahead of you. To walk the path of light, or darkness, or that rarely trodden path of twilight, your gifts and magic will reflect your choice. Light magic is the magic of life. Of creation. It heals and it builds. You can embrace this, take hold of it and create life where was their death before. You can remain in the light and hope that it will be strong enough to protect you. But I see in

your soul darkness, you are not unlike the one you are beginning to respect. You may embrace darkness; take it as your own. Bend it to your will. Help to bring forth the change needed to your stagnant world. Kill and destroy, revel in your chaos. Make others serve you, power to do what ever you want. Make your choice..." The force of the voice reverberated across the sky, and shook the ground. Knox rolled his eyes a bit, evidently this was a practiced thing.

Draco thought about it for a minute. He would never be light, and he did not want to be. But he had seen darkness in the eyes of his father, true darkness that left a taint upon the soul. He knew that he could not ever become his father, and he chose.

"I do not want the light, nor do I want the darkness. Two sides of the same coin, just different angles. I want the middle, the grey. Magic is what it is, and I intend to use it to its fullest." Draco said. His voice carried a magical quality to it that sounded and bounced around the clearing.

"Your choice has been declared to sun and moon, earth and sky, stars and magic. Fate has set your path, but it is guided by your will. By choice, by right, and by magic, so it is spoken, so mote it be..." Meissa finished as wind swirled around the clearing, the stars brightened unbelievably, and Draco's aura exploded outwards, a swirl of stunning silver and bright blue

"Your path is set, your choice given. We congratulate you on reaching your 16th year of life. You will be blessed by your ancestors. Look towards them, and embrace their gifts." Knox finished, nodding towards them. The old man stood up and spoke first.

I am Mailloche, as they told you. One of the first in the line. It troubles me deeply to see my line fall as it has. A MalFoi bows to no one! And yet the former head of the family not only did that, he nearly squandered the family fortune away trying to appease his 'Master'. The Black Heir does not demand your servitude, nor does he ask you to bow. A MalFoi's loyalty is not given lightly, but we are loyal to those who we wish to be, remember that. I gift upon you a greater connection between your mind and magic. You know the benefits and have felt the effects." His ancestor said as a sapphire blue mist began



to surround him and was absorbed into his skin. He felt the magic settle near his core, just waiting to be activated. Next, the woman stood up.

"I am Natalie Cranque, a former Malfoy, your many times great Aunt. I wished to be present at your choice because I feel that I can be of help. I was a sword duelist and I think the skill will serve you well. I gift upon you the mastership of the Rapier, a weapon of grace and deadly beauty." She told him, as a sharp silver mist was not absorbed but impacted his chest. The knowledge of the sword assaulted his mind but was easily sorted due to his Occlumency.

"I have already told you who I am," Knox said to him. "Regardless of you not being a, I will gift you with something, as I do all that we see. I gift upon you the Martial ability and I will unlock your affinity of the wind. Martial will allow you to fight better and learn through experience, as well as making it easier to learn wind affinity, once trained will be a valuable tool in fighting, and if you can train it well enough, a good way to travel as well. Good luck, Heir of MalFoi." Knox told him.

"Like I told my own heir, I will gift you with nothing but the access to the knowledge I left behind. I believe that you have already benefited from my work on the mind arts. Continue training, and seek out the book of time. It is within my Heir's possession but I do not think that he knows its power. Precautions must be taken though; an ample supply of food and drink will be needed. Take care of any business you may have for the set amount of time. Do not exceed the set amount of time or their may be consequences." The first Black told Draco cryptically. Draco nodded and the people and the clearing began to fade out.

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That's it for this time, next chapter should be up soon, hopefully. More training, will reading, why Tonks never had a choosing, the mysterious Book of Time, and other stuff up next. I really want to start getting into the rituals soon.

What should Neville be gifted with?

Should Remus quite the order and join them now, or later. I was thinking that he could bring Narcissa around, but she may be a lost cause.

What should the Twins and Tonks animal form be? Not saying that they will have them, but a what if sort of thing. Wondering if Moody should already have a form. Would not surprise me.

Hope you enjoyed the chapter.

Remember to REVIEW, they are helping me.

And kudos goes out to the person who helped me with the elvish names for Draco's and Neville's forms, thought they sounded cool and gave it some background.

Till next time,

Omnis Potens

## Chapter 17: (.....)

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“How was it?” Seraph asked Draco at breakfast.

“Different, sort of like Christmas but you get powers instead of things.” Draco said absentmindedly. He was very tired and he blamed it on the gathering that had taken place in his mind, or his dreams, or something.

“What did you get? What did you choose?” Neville asked, very interested as he would go through the same in close to a month’s time.

“A few things. Should make fighting a bit easier, the mind arts too. As for your second question, that is none of your business, Longbottom.” Draco said. Neville gave the boy a reproachful look but Seraph shrugged, and told Neville that it was a personal choice that never needed to be told. Actions spoke louder than words anyway. Neville thought about this as they continued to eat breakfast.

“I do have a message to pass on though.” Draco spoke up.

“What’s that?” Seraph asked. The last bit of advice from Meissa had been invaluable.

“He wants us to use the ‘Book of Time’ or whatever that is. Said that you have to be careful though, to bring a lot of food and don’t exceed the set amount of time or there could be consequences, but he did not say what. He told me that you already have the book, but don’t know its power or maybe its use.” Draco told him, going over the conversation in his mind again. Seraph looked pensive for a moment, before he opened the trunk he always seemed to have on him. It was convenient, Draco supposed, to have anything you need within a finger’s reach.

“I do, its called ‘Chrono Potentia’. The name translates to ‘Time Power’. I guess you could call that the book of time. Bought it from Borgin, as well as a few other items a couple of weeks back. Cheleb talked him out of a curse meant for me and I got rid of his memory of the event.” Seraph said from the bowels of his trunk, his voice echoing slightly. He came back out with the old leather bound book in his hands, the title reflected oddly silver, as if written in Unicorn blood.

“What?” He asked as he saw Draco’s disbelieving stare.

“That was you? You’re the one who obliterated Borgin?” Draco asked, seemingly not being able to wrap his mind around the possibility.

“Yeah, why? And how do you know about it?” Seraph asked. Maybe he had not made as clean a getaway as he originally thought.

“Everyone knows about it. His nephew had to come and take over the shop because Borgin was no longer capable of answering to his own name, let alone run a business.” Draco said, and this time Seraph looked at him in disbelief. “Yeah, you wiped his mind, pretty much all of it, I’d say.”

“I followed the instructions from the book, and Borgin said that it was a hard charm to do so I did put as much power as I could behind it. I wanted Cheleb and I, as well as the transaction to be forgotten, not his life.” Seraph said. He wasn’t sad about wiping the man’s mind, not really. He was more disappointed in the fact that he had done the damn charm wrong.

“You would have to first take into account that Borgin is about as strong, magically speaking, as Longbottom, or what Longbottom used to be, or maybe still is. Don’t know, haven’t seen him cast anything lately. Either way, the man was weak. You would probably be the equivalent of Dumbledore to him, and Dumbledore would be the equivalent of a god, or Merlin compared. The hard part was probably not the power put into the spell, since the man knew how to do it, but concentrating on removing the memories correctly. I’ve heard Father speaking of new recruits not able to perform it correctly because they have no understanding of Occlumency.” Draco told him. Seraph nodded. And Neville flexed his muscles, probably imagining crushing

Malfoy's head as a spoon somehow became a compacted ball. Draco did not appear to be fazed but did not saying anything else during breakfast.

'Memory charms could be broken, but at great expense to the mind,' Seraph thought to himself, 'Maybe the best way to oblivate someone would be to mentally remove the memory. I suppose it would be like what Vulcan was talking about; only not duplicating the memory...I'm going to have to look into this.'

They made their way up to the Ghost Room and began a light workout. Neville ran for a bit but then concentrated on the weights, enjoying the challenge of stacking as many weights as he could to push himself, eventually he had to use sticking charms to add more. He did that until one of the bars broke and nearly impaled his leg. Draco had searched through the armory for a pair of Rapiers and was now dueling one of the dummies. He was taking well to the new gift, only bearing shallow cuts across his arms, face, and chest. He had gotten a good hit on the dummy, a large gash went from the right shoulder to the left hip, but it had been the only one. Seraph had sat down and attempted to open the Book of Time. It was an odd looking book, the cover was worn and frayed leather and from what he could see, the pages were clothe like. It had its own aura though, and that bothered Seraph. The aura was a light red and a deep bronze, and while the book looked amazingly old, its aura felt timeless. He tried to open the book, but the cover would not budge, but there was a magical flash in the title of the book. Had he not been a scanner, he would not have seen it. Still, the flash did not really tell him anything.

"Chrono Potentia" Seraph said aloud. The words flashed again, and words appeared under it. They were in English and he said them aloud again.

"Book of Time." The words, like those before it flashed. More words appeared and replaced the English words.

"Ein Geschenk zu den Männern mangels der Zeit" He said, expecting the words to flash again. They did not.

“A Gift to man in need” Seraph said as the slight dizziness he had begun to associate with his language gift left him. The words flashed. Japanese, Chinese, Gaelic, Anglo Saxon, French, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, Runic, Druidic, surprisingly Grimgtongue, and unexpectedly a squiggly text that he recognized as Parseltongue after an amazing bout of dizziness that made him want to take a nap, as well as a few other magical languages he had never heard of. Each language said something different. From them, he learned that the book was a gift from a lesser ‘god’, one of the first true magic wielders. To the muggles, he would be known as a prophet of sorts, but the book did not tell his name. This ‘god’ had a unique ability above all others though; he had a power over time. With this power he was able to live for an unimaginable amount of time. He grew tired of life eventually and decided to help those who he found worthy. He put every last ounce of his power into his book. That was when the book had opened.

The page that it had turned to glowed with a grayish light as words were written in gold across its pages, completely in Aramaic.

I must thank you for opening this book. Not many can say the same. This book is a powerful magical artifact that is not to be taken lightly. It is a training tool of the highest order, to be used by those who need to prepare for conflict or the betterment of the self. This ‘book’ is nothing more than a vessel to hold my enchantment and power. This will be the last time this book is used and it will move no farther. In order to use this tool, sacrifice must be given. The sacrifice is not of a barbaric nature, no, it requires the sacrifice of a single room. This room will never be used again for its original purpose and will only serve as a means to use the tool. The larger the room, the better, as the magic in the book will not have to work as hard to increase the size. If the book uses less power in converting the sacrificed space, more power can be used to increase the amount of time allowed within the room, and less time taken to recharge it.

The room becomes a place in which time has little meaning. The majority of my power is used to create a tear in the dimension to bring the room to another one. A dimension that is very different from our own. The room is used to contain the rip. If the book was activated in an open space, there would be severe magical backlash, destroying

everything for a thousand miles from the point of the tear. I do not recommend doing that. More information can be found inside the room once it is created.

Before entering, a great amount of food must be brought into the room, for once you activate the room, you may not exit. It is suggested that all business with the outside world is either postponed or completed. Do not exceed the set amount of time within the room or you will be forced to age the time spent within the room.

To activate, place the book in the center of the outside of the door to the room you wish to use. Open the book and place five drops of blood on the page. You must complete the chant.

Seraph closed the book after leafing through a few of the pages and seeing that there was nothing else to be read. 'Well, that was informative, in a vague sort of way.' Seraph thought to himself. He would have to change the Ghost Room, as it was the largest that he had. He was sure that the book would not change much more than the fact that time was slower within it. He put the book down and transfigured metal replicas of his long blade, only maybe three times as heavy as it was. They were crude, and he realized that he needed to actually start learning and practicing spells. He tested the balance and activated a dummy.

The dummy took the offered weapon and studied it for a moment, testing its swing, balance, and weight before taking an offensive position. Evidently it knew what it was doing. Seraph took his preferred balanced position and waited. The dummy did not take long to make a move and struck with a fast overhead attack. Seraph dodged and rolled behind the dummy and sliced the dummy behind the left knee, getting splashed in the face with blood for his effort. The dummy limped for a moment but then stood up again; ignoring the fact that it had lost the mobility of its leg. The dummy struck again with a smooth arc that clanged against the block Seraph put up. The two jumped back at the same time, and charged, both had their blades held high. A series of sparks and clangs resulted when they met. Seraph received a deep gash to the cheek and the dummy lost the use of his off hand. Well the whole arm, actually. It had been caught by a particularly strong upward arc from Seraph to its armpit, due to

the dull edges; the sword did not sever the appendage, but did damage several nerves. The dummy, now with a weaker grip on its blade settled for faster attacks then strong, and caught Seraph in the chest. The dummy charged again, and was about to impale Seraph in the gut when its opponent suddenly jumped over its head in a graceful curve, landing behind it. Seraph had initially wanted to jump above the blade, but once he was at the top of the jump, he felt the same push he felt as a grim and it vaulted him over the dummy and he landed on his feet, as if jumping and doing a flip to behind a charging opponent was an every day occurrence. Seraph felt a burning in his hands again. The black glow around his palm suddenly erupted into flames and climbed up the blunt katana he was wielding as he was in the process of giving the dummy one last hit. The dummy turned around in time to see a flaming black sword slice cleanly through its upper torso and chest. The two sections of the body stayed intact for a moment, and the dummy looked like it wanted to attack again, before the upper part slid off to the side and the bottom half fell to its knees and then to the ground, its nondescript eyes seeming to dim.

Neville, who had been boxing another dummy, had stopped in order to watch Seraph. When he saw the black flame and a severed dummy torso, he ran over.

"I think you did more then paralyze it this time, Seraph." Neville told him. Seraph gave a rueful laugh and agreed.

"I think you killed it. I mean, I don't think it could get fixed. Whatever you did closed up the wounds." Draco said as he joined them. He sported a few more cuts as well as a heavily flowing gash on his upper left arm.

"Hopefully Winky can save it. I know not to do that again, unless I can improve the resistance of them. And we were just complaining about them being too strong. Maybe I'll get some armor or something for them. I can't keep cutting them in half or risk burning it to a crisp. I need to learn how to fight with it, and this won't cut it." Seraph said, watching as the transfigured sword melted in his hand and turned to ash.



“How did you do that, anyway?” Draco asked, noticing the melted sword and the scorch marks on the body just above and below the cut.

“No harm in telling you, you’re going to see it anyway. I have a fire affinity. Black fire. Seems to destroy or burn everything but me.” Seraph said as he concentrated on the feeling again. He succeeded in making a small ball of fire in the palm of his left hand. The ball increased in size until it was as big as his fist. On a whim, he did the same with the other hand until he had two fist sized balls of fire. He stepped back from the two and slowly pushed the two balls of fire together, creating a large fireball in the palms of his hands. Seraph smirked as he turned from them and pushed with all the he had into his palms. The black and silver ball of fire shot from his hands like a cannon and left a trailing black flame after image, actually pushing him back a couple of feet. There was no arch to it, just a straight shot that impacted the stands on the other side of the field. The impact blew the stands apart and sent flaming shrapnel everywhere. The burning pieces turned to ash before they hit the ground and Draco and Neville looked at Seraph with a new respect.

“Yeah, I think I’m going to have to learn to control that.” Seraph said, a little above a strained whisper.

“You think?” Neville said, but was shocked to see Seraph on the ground, starting to stand up shakily.

“Maybe I put too much behind it...” He mumbled to himself, looking at the destruction. Draco nodded, thinking about what sort of use he could find for his air affinity. He had felt it when jumping back from a parry, a nonexistent wind pushed him a bit further then he planned to. It helped him keep his balance after a shaky dodge, but not much more.

“Did you find out anything about the book?” Neville asked, still looking at the ruined section of the stands across the field.

“Yeah, it basically turns a room into a rip to another dimension where time travels slower then in ours, not sure about the actual difference though. Once you go in, you can’t come back out for set amount of

time. Go past that time, you age. Not being able to leave gives rise to the problem of food and equipment, so the elves will have to join us, your mother too, Draco. The room it uses can't be used for anything else again, ever. I'm going to activate it for this room; hopefully it won't change it too much. Besides the obvious. I can't help but think that there is more too it though, but the book won't say anymore." Seraph told them. Neville shook his head and Draco tried to wrap his head around a rip into another dimension.

"Don't do anything by half, do you?" Neville asked. "Need more time to train, well I would think that if they had the nerve to get one, they would use a time turner. Not you though. You have to use some probably long lost magical artifact that's so old history has forgotten it that creates your very own portal to another dimension."

"Yeah, something like that." Seraph told him.

"So when do we start?" Draco asked, surprising Seraph. He would not have thought that the boy would be eager to try something like this, but maybe he could mellow out and stop being an idiot. He wondered what the knowledge of who he was would do to him, but mentally shrugged. His identity could wait until later, it wasn't like he was that person anymore anyway.

"As soon as we can gather the food, elves, your mother, clothes, my trunk, and I think I'll clean out the stock of ritual items at Flytr's. I don't know how long we can stay in there, but it will be longer than usual because we're using a larger room. I say tomorrow night at the soonest." Seraph told him. The other two nodded.

"Two months till the start of school..." Neville said, and Seraph saw a strange glint in the boy's eye. His light brown eyes had turned a brownish green like algae, and Seraph knew that Neville's animal was stirring within him. "I can't wait." The shaggy boy said as he went in search of Cheleb for a run, he could not keep up with anyone else. Winky was called in to heal Seraph and Draco and then set upon the dummy. After nearly an hour at work she could not get the lower half to stay working. The top half worked just as well as it always had, but the various things connecting the two halves, things like organ, bones, skin, veins and more were burned closed. She threw her hands up in

frustration and popped out to make lunch, with instructions to tell Dobby to buy as much food as he could and begin placing preserving charms on a large majority of it. Seraph was hesitant to give an order like that to a house elf, if the ones in the Hogwarts kitchen's were anything to go by, but shrugged the thought off.

"Looks like I'll be visiting Vulcan. I can hit Flytr's as well as Spinner's Ice box. I meant to go there anyway. It will be easier to keep the food good in an Ice Box instead of having to constantly cast preserving charms on them." Seraph said to Draco.

"I'll speak to my mother and tell her what is going to be happening. She won't be very happy about this." Draco told him.

"Not my problem, just tell her that she might finally be of some use soon." Seraph told him as he levitated the dummy behind him and walked out of the Ghost Room. He dressed in his usual gear, made sure his blades were strapped to his back and hidden inside of his cloak, silver reflective shades dawned, he put the dummy into his trunk, turned it into a ring and flooed to the 'Leaky Cauldron'. 'Perhaps I should have flooed to Vulcan's place instead.' Seraph thought to himself as he received many hateful and scared looks. He changed his eyes to a warm and shinning blue, not unlike the old bastard's, and took off his sun glasses. The eyes and a warm smile of the stranger seemed to put them more at ease and they stopped glaring at him, some even returned the smile. 'Idiots,' Seraph thought as he made his way through the backdoor. 'Bright eyes and a smile doesn't mean that I'm friendly.'

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Diagon Alley was a little less bright and cheery then it usually was. This seemed due to the loss of Azkaban. Whether or not people believed the Ministry about Death Eater involvement, a major safety net had been lost. It had been said that half of the wizard population only slept soundly at night because they knew that Azkaban held the bad elements. Now it was gone, and there could be escaped convicts anywhere. Aurors were posted at the entrances of the Alley and at the apparition point. Seraph scoffed. They were preaching to the

choir. An escaped convict is not about to walk through the Brightside of the Alley. If they wanted to actually find something, they should patrol Knocturn, or more specifically, the slums of Knocturn. But Fudge was probably only posting guards where they were so that he would not lose public support.

‘Spinner’s Ice box’ was the first stop. The establishment was... small. When you walked into the overly large closet that was an excuse for a shop, you were met by a counter that held a large book and a clerk. The clerk looked to be fresh from Hogwarts and was twirling her hair with her finger, popping a piece of gum in her mouth.

“Hi there... what can I do for you?” The not yet a woman asked him, eyes trailing over his chest. Her accent was noticeably not British.

“Yeah, I need appliances.” He told her. “For food?” He said when he was met with a blank look. She seemed to catch on and leaned over the table to show Seraph the book that was right in front of him, nearly loosing one of her breasts out of her robes in the process. Seraph was tempted to help with her...problem, but decided to against it. Her aura had a distinctly red and greasy appearance and it made him feel dirty. When she looked back up Seraph delved into her mind. She was seventeen, a drop out from the Salem Witch’s Academy. Her uncle’s friend owned the shop and he had given her a job. Before then she worked as a muggle prostitute, using magic to keep her clean, for the most part. Seraph left her mind quickly after seeing a rather graphic memory involving several hundred dollars and a man named Bud...and Bud’s dog, Buck. As he was pulling back though, he was able to actually pick up on her thoughts, something that the book had mentioned but he had not tried yet. If he had not seen into her mind, or seen her aura, he may have been tempted. But as it was, he could not wait to get out of the small shop.

“Right here, see? Just choose what you want. I don’t know much about them, just that they hold food and stuff. If what you want is in stock, then you can take it now. They are shrunk, free of charge. But I’m sure you’re used to carrying a large package, aren’t you?” The young whore asked him. Seraph decided to ignore the comment instead of losing his breakfast, images of Buck in his head and he considered self oblivation. ‘Bloody yanks’ Seraph thought as he

looked through the large catalog. Everything that you would ever want was in there, Hogwarts style ovens, tables, lights, chairs, various bits of furniture that Seraph had no idea what they were for, kitchen utensils, Ice boxes, and a myriad of other things. Seraph chose one of the Hogwarts style ovens, several ice boxes, a few overly large preserving-pantries for food stuffs and potion and ritual ingredients as well as anything else he thought they might need and a few things he thought they wouldn't like logs of wood and slabs of metal. They would find some use for them. As it happened, everything that he wanted was in stock, and he left quickly after leaving with a large bag of shrunken items. The bag was placed in his trunk and he made his way to Flytr's.

He walked into the shop, ignoring the dummy that was pretending to read at the front desk and twisted the broken bezoar.

"Can I help...oh, its you. What will you be needing this time?" The lady asked as she went back to doing her nails.

"Everything, actually." He told her, unshrinking his trunk and pulling out his wand.

"That's rich...hey! What the hell do you think you're doing?" She demanded, taking notice of the trunk and wand.

"Taking everything, like I said." He told her.

"You can't afford all this, and if you plan on stealing it, know that you won't be walking out of here!" She said vehemently.

"I own all this, so it's not like I'm stealing. How long will it take to restock everything?" He asked her. She looked at him dumbly for a moment before she realized that he was being serious.

"Three weeks for everything to be reordered and stocked again." She told him. She knew that there was a new owner, but she had thought she would never meet them, like the last owners.

"How much do you make a week?"

“About four-fifty galleons a week.” She told him. Her statement felt wrong to his ears, and he realized that she was lying. ‘Interesting’ he thought to himself.

“You’re lying,” He told her, and she paled slightly, “But I’ll give you 200 galleons now and I want you to close the shop up until everything is restocked. Go on vacation or something, I don’t care.” He said, pulling out his money bag and dumping the correct amount of gold pieces on the table. She looked at him oddly once again, then at the money and nodded before she scooped it all up and went to the front of the store. Seraph opened up the trunk to one of the larger rooms and set the pantries up on the walls. From inside of the trunk he began to concentrate on what he wanted.

“Accio” He intoned, thinking of everything in the shop above him. Various ingredients began to shoot towards the pantries, ordering themselves on the shelves the way that they were in the shop. Various packages like the Animagus Pack set themselves next to the pantries. Within ten minutes everything was packed away into the pantries and Seraph felt like he wanted pass out.

“I may be getting stronger physically, but I still need to get stronger magically.” He said to himself as he climbed out of the trunk. His trunk secured on his finger, he left Flytr’s and headed towards Vulcan’s shop.

Seraph was welcomed warmly when he showed up. That was until he dumped the two pieces of the dummy at Vulcan’ feet.

“What did you do to it?” Vulcan asked sadly, checking for a pulse. Seraph would have laughed, but he did not want Vulcan to yell at him. The man looked close to tears, actually.

“I’d say I killed it. I didn’t mean to though, we were sparring and I set the blunt blade I was using on fire and it went clean through.” Seraph told him. Vulcan nodded and began to cast a number of spells under his breath. The dummy slowly began to mend itself together and soon it stood up on its own.

“Done,” A very tired looking Vulcan told him. “Just don’t do that again.” Seraph nodded.

“Do you have anything here that is fire resistant? I can put armor on it when I plan to use my affinity. I also want to know why they don’t behave like humans. I mean physically. When I set the level before the fight, I think my hand should have gone through its chest. Its bones don’t break like they should, and they don’t slow down for pain.” Seraph told him.

“You set the dummies before the fight, yes? Well that’s your problem. They react to the strength you show first, and your skill second. At a base strength level they are stronger than the usual human, still no match for the strength of a magical creature, or you, though. Once you hit it, it sets its strength to above yours. Its body changes to accommodate your strength. A bone is generally hard to break by a punch or kick, but with your strength, it would not be a problem. Their bones and body are augmented so that it becomes as hard to break as an average person would find breaking a bone would be. You may be able to bend one of my swords, but it would be hard for you to bend one that was made to resist your strength, got it? The skill is set once you begin fighting and changes as needed.” Vulcan told him. Seraph nodded and put the dummy into his trunk again.

“I’m going to need a few good Rapiers and some practice swords like these” Seraph told him as he showed Vulcan his katana and tanto, “As well as some dragon hide vests for the dummies, fire proof if possible. And any books that you have on mechanics would be helpful. I’m not going to be available for a while, not sure how long, but I plan to do a lot of things in a short amount of time.” Seraph told him cryptically.

“Ah...I see. I was going to suggest that you charm your training clothing heavier, but if you are going to use that then I suppose there will be no need.” Vulcan said, equally as cryptic as Seraph had been.

“Right...” Seraph said eloquently.

“Yes, well, let’s see what we have here.” Vulcan said as he began to go through a pile of swords, absentmindedly tossing the ones that he

did not need over his shoulder, directly at Seraph. Seraph was able to dodge the first one that nearly impaled him through the chest and began to catch them and put them on an empty table nearby. It was a lethal juggle, but Seraph was entertaining himself by seeing how fast he could snatch them out of the sky before they hit him. He missed a couple of times, resulting in light cuts, but avoided serious injury.

“All right, here we are.” Vulcan said, turning around with a five or six rapiers in his hands and taking in Seraph’s appearance. “You could have moved, you know.” Vulcan told him, setting the thin swords on the front counter. “Who are the rapiers for?”

“Draco Malfoy. He had his choice last night and must have received a gift with it, probably the martial ability as well. I’m sure he gained an affinity as well, but I don’t know what it is. The other boy, Neville, should be having his choice in the next couple of weeks. His birthday is the day before mine. They both went through the Animagus transformations, both look like they were full, from the changes they went through anyway.” He told the large sooty man.

“How strong do you think they got?” Vulcan asked as he began to pull out a few books from a small shelf behind the counter.

“We all increased in strength after the transformation, speed too. I know that I’m still stronger than Malfoy, but his speed increased dramatically. I’m faster than him for the moment, but I’m going to have to train hard to make sure it stays that way. Neville is stronger than both of us, but much slower than us as well. He looks like a smaller version of you now, only much more green.”

“Me if I was smaller and greenish...he must be earth bound then?”

“I’m pretty sure.”

“I sensed the affinity in him, but it was slightly locked. The small part that isn’t is what that family calls their ‘green thumb gift’. After his choice it should be unlocked. I’ll give you a couple of claymores as well, they should suit him.” Vulcan said.



“Those should work. What about protection for the dummies?” Seraph asked and Vulcan went into the back for a moment, returning a few minutes later with his arms full.

“Here are three battle robes, highly fire retardant. They won’t protect them from physical hits and spells as well as your’s will, but they should work. A couple of practice katana and the claymores, as well as another suit for the Malfoy boy. They will set to him once he puts them on. There are a few books here, one on weapon making, and another on manipulating, purifying, and conjuring metal. One on healing the dummies, and fourth one on general crafting, this one should show you how to make usable enchanted items.” Vulcan explained to him, motioning to each item as he spoke about them.

“Excellent. Thanks, Vulcan.” Seraph told him.

“It is my pleasure, young master. Come see me the next time that you can, I’m sure it will be longer for you then for me.” Vulcan said, laughing as Seraph walked out of the store.

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“Dobby.” Seraph called once he returned to the Keep.

“Yes, Master Black sir?”

“Fill these ice boxes with the food you got. If you got too much for the boxes, then go to Spinner’s and buy a few more. I got a Hogwarts style oven for you guys to use once I set the room up.” Seraph explained to the now overly excited house elf.

“Yes sir!” Dobby said, his ears flapping wildly as he nodded his head emphatically. Seraph pulled out a book from his trunk and began to read. Walking around the alley reminded him that he had not been out for a while, and going out was not going to be an option for a while if they went through with the time book. He decided that he wanted to go out tonight and see what was so special about the muggle clubs his cousin raved about. Not that the fat tub of lard had ever been twenty feet from one of them. They tended to be very

selective, and according to Dudley, he 'Didn't want to be caught dead in a place so discriminatory.' The irony had not escaped Seraph at the time.

There was a problem though. Should there be a situation, Voldemort or otherwise, they did not have any means to escape quickly. Well Seraph did, but the others did not. Apparition, while something that he planned on mastering soon, was not something that had studied yet. That is why Draco and Neville found Seraph at the kitchen table a few hours later looking over a large book, his wand out, and several mundane objects in front of him.

"Seraph, what you working on?" Neville asked. His question was answered a moment later when Seraph picked up a small fork and tapped it with his wand, saying 'Portus' clearly. The fork glowed a deep blue, before returning to its original color. Seraph took a small piece of parchment and dropped it on the fork. A small flash was seen as the fork and parchment look as if it was being sucked through a small hole before they disappeared completely.

"What am I doing wrong?" They heard him ask himself, not even realizing that they were there. "Power, intention, device, destination...That's where I went wrong. I wonder where that fork ended up then..." Seraph asked the room in general. He picked up a saucer and took on a look of deep concentration and tapped it with his wand, muttering 'Portus' again. He put the small plate back down onto the table and put a piece of string on top of the plate. Unlike the last attempt, the plate did not disappear on contact.

"Voice Test: Activate." Seraph told the plate. The saucer flashed a dark purple this time as it was sucked into itself and disappeared. A moment later the plate appeared. Right on top of Neville's head. The sudden weight on the boy's head made him jump and the plate smashed on the ground.

"Thought I didn't know you were there?" Seraph asked, as he turned around and picked up a piece of the broken plate.

"Yeah...actually. What were you doing anyway?" Neville asked.

“That was a portkey, Longbottom. Merlin.” Draco said, exasperated.

“Shut up. I knew what it was. Have you ever seen one made?” Neville asked. The silver haired boy turned away, just in time to catch a piece of the broken plate that Seraph had picked up a moment before.

“What was that for...?” Draco trailed off as he felt a pull from his stomach he associated with portkey travel. The boy appeared a split second later at the other side of the kitchen.

“Good, all three work.” Seraph said to himself.

“You just used me as a test subject!” The Malfoy Lord yelled in an undignified fashion.

“Yeah. That was a timed portkey. Had you not been distracted, you would have seen me make it and avoided catching it. Not my fault.” Seraph said with a shrug while Neville laughed. Draco glared at Seraph but stopped when it was met unflinchingly. “I figure that since we can’t apparate yet, portkey would be the next best thing to use for a quick escape. They are much harder to ward against than apparition. Test 2: Activate.” Seraph said as the small piece of plate in Draco’s hand suddenly gave off a dull deep purple light and the boy vanished again. Draco returned a moment later in the space that he had originally occupied before the first portkey trip.

“Multiple uses worked as well.” Seraph said off handedly, ignoring the death glare he was receiving from Draco. “Chill, Draco. I bear gifts for my transgressions, Happy Birthday and all that” Seraph told the fuming boy who now looked momentarily stunned at having someone wish him a happy birthday. His mother had wished him one earlier in the morning, but she was always the only one who did. Seraph opened up his trunk and pulled out the dragon hide outfit that Vulcan had supplied and the other swords he had been given.

“Some rapiers, claymores, and my practice blades. These are all dragon hide, both Neville and I have them already.” Seraph told them. Neville picked up a claymore in each hand and gave them an experimental swing. A small smile appeared on the boy’s face as he twirled them in his hands expertly. He took one in his hand and

attempted to bend it, only find that apart from the usual flexibility, it did not give.

“These are good...” Neville said. Draco had taken the rapiers and selected a thin silver one that reflected blue on its fuller. The wire hilt was filled in with a blue tinted metal, making the guard look intricate while providing a little bit more protection to the knuckles. He picked up the bundle of black leather and put on the odd robe. What kind of battle robe was left open in the front anyway? That was when he noticed the vests and the pants, along with the boots and holster.

“Layered for better protection and mobility.” Seraph explained and Draco nodded, still inspecting the pants. “I’ve been practicing creating portkeys because I figure tonight would be as good a night as any to check out muggle London. Especially if we are going to be stuck in the ‘Ghost Room’ for a while.” Seraph told them. Neville nodded, looking forward to seeing muggle London. He had never been allowed to go anywhere but Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade by himself, and never anywhere not magical with his Gran. Draco was having other thoughts.

“Muggle London?” He asked incredulously. “You are kidding, right? Learning muggle fighting techniques is bad enough, but I refuse to associate with muggles.” Draco said with a sneer. Seraph just looked at him for a moment before he shrugged his shoulders and turned towards Neville.

“Be ready in about twenty minutes.” He told him. Neville nodded and left to get ready. Seraph left as well, leaving Draco alone in the kitchen, muttering to himself about muggle filth. He stayed there, muttering to himself, for the next five minutes, before realizing that it was unlikely that he would see outside of this house, muggle or not, anytime soon.

"Damn muggles." He said as he went to his room to change.

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The boys met back in the kitchen fifteen minutes later. Draco was sporting his new dragon hide suit, sans the trench robe, with a blue shirt. Neville, after being told that nothing but his dragon hide suit would be accepted in the muggle world (and barely even then) wore it, also without the coat, wearing an undershirt he had cut the sleeves off instead. Seraph was decked out in full regalia, silver tinted glasses et al.

"Glad you could join us, Draco." Seraph said, taking in the boy's appearance. He was glad that he would not have to dress the boy like he had nearly had to do with Neville. 'Damn Purebloods' He thought.

"Yeah, yeah. We going to go?" Draco asked. He may not like muggles, but anything sounded better right now than being stuck here.

"Yeah, here take these." He said, handing them both a silver chain necklace. He had found them in his desk, several of them in fact. He figured that they were probably used for the same purpose he was planning on using them for. He tapped each of them, saying 'Portus'. After he did it to a third, he put it around his neck.

"Those will take you to the alley just outside of the Leakey Cauldron. They return to here with the activation phrase 'Grim's Keep'. They are set to activate in about ten seconds." He told them as they hurriedly put them over their necks as well.

"Do you have any place in mind?" Neville asked.

"Not really, but my cousin-" Seraph was cut off as the portkey activated. Unlike the usual feeling of being pulled from his stomach, Seraph felt like he had been forced to stay still as the rest of the world was pulled around him. Still confused as to why that was, or if the portkey had malfunctioned, he did not realize that he had already made it to his destination. On his feet.

"I hate those things." Neville muttered as he caught himself before he fell over. Draco had landed on his feet, but he too looked slightly off balanced.

“That was...odd.” Seraph commented. The two looked at him for a minute before Seraph shrugged and continued what he was saying before the portkey had activated. “My cousin always said that a cab driver can always take you to the hotspots, not like he would know though.”

“Cab?” Draco asked. His question went unanswered as he followed Seraph and Neville to the street. Seraph failed to hail a cab for about three minutes before he got fed up and made a loud parseltongue hiss which sounded like a high-pitched whistle. Three taxi’s immediately stopped in front of him and Seraph motioned for the two to get in.

“Oi, mate, that’s quite the whistle you got there. Probably heard you down at the docks, they would! Now what can I do you gents for ‘tis evenin’?” The hairy cab driver asked. Seraph answered after a moment.

“A club.” He told the driver.

“Fine choice that is. What kind of club?”

“A dance club.” Neville told the man.

“Well aint they all dance clubs, eh!” The Driver said, laughing at his own wit. A smell of whiskey permeated the air. The man was close to pissing himself with laughter now.

“The best.” Draco yelled at the driver who sobered up, slightly.

“Like they’d let you lot in there! Fine, fine, I’ll take you to the best bleedin’ club in the West End.” The driver took off and stopped not five minutes away at a large building with bright purple lights proclaiming it to be ‘Doon’. Seraph reached into his black velvet pouch, hoping he could pull muggle money out of it as well as well. He could, and paid the cabbie before following the other two out of the car.

“What now?” Neville asked. Seraph pointed to a line that was forming in front of the door to the club. They stood in line for about ten

minutes before Draco threatened he would hex someone if they didn't move. A few people in front of them gave him odd looks. A couple of minutes later they made it to the front where two large bouncers, both bald, one black, the other white, put a thick velvet rope across Draco's path.

"Club's full." The large white guy said.

"Hey, Rodie, let me in, babe!" A short but well proportioned woman said from behind them. The rope was pulled back up and she went in, giving a kiss to the large black man, obviously 'Rodie'.

"What the hell was that?" Draco demanded. He was a Malfoy, he got what he wanted, whatever it was at the time. To be denied by muggles of all things was highly degrading.

"Club's full, we don't like you kind here. So leave, damn punks." The man who was not Rodie said. Draco's face flushed, and Seraph grabbed his arm as he was reaching for his wand.

"Hey, you don't want to go in there anyway, bunch of stuck up pricks trying to get into their bosses good graces." A slender girl said off to the side. Draco looked at her, and his eyes flashed almost imperceptively, but Seraph saw it.

"I think she's right." Draco said after a moment.

"Well come on then!" She said, motioning the three over.

"Hey, I'm Carla...and you must be delicious." She said to Draco, rubbing her hand across his chest. Draco nearly jumped three feet back, whether from the contact or the fact that she was a muggle, Seraph was not sure.

"Oh, that's too bad, my cousin is gay too." She said. The way her voice rang, Seraph was sure that she was only playing at being disappointed, but the statement about her cousin was true. His Legilimency must have gotten stronger after the gift had activated.

"I'm not gay!" Draco screamed in a slightly unmanly manner. She nodded placating way.

"Of course not, but I'm sure your friends won't think any different of you when you come out of the closet." She told him reassuringly. Neville was now laughing his arse off and Seraph was not far behind.

"I'm not gay!" Draco shouted, more shrilly this time, but the girl, Carla, ignored him in favor of a new specimen.

"Hey there, tough stuff, love the arms." She told Neville, as she caressed them. Neville's face turned a bright Weasley red at this, not used to any feminine contact.

"Th-Thanks." He managed to say.

"Oh, and he's shy! Strong and silent, my kind of man. I know the perfect place to go. 'Punks' of all kinds are welcome, even you there, Mr. Goth." She said, looking at Seraph.

"Lead on then." Seraph told her. Carla took Neville's arm in her's and led the way, Draco still stuttering behind them about not being gay. They arrived at a shady looking factory about ten minutes later with no sign and seemingly no entrance. Muffled booms could be felt beneath their feet though. After a moment, Seraph realized that it was a beat and that he could almost make out the words to some song.

"It's below us?" Seraph asked.

"Yep, come on lover," She said, dragging Neville along. "It's this way." She lead them to a large slab of metal that fit into the road smoothly and kicked it two times, then again, then another two times and waited. A minute later, the metal split into two and an elevator appeared. "Well, hop on." She told them as she entered the large cube, pulling Neville with her. The other two followed a bit more hesitantly. Seraph was sure that she had not lied to them once, but he was not sure he liked the situation all that much. Draco seemed torn as well, but for different reasons. His fright of muggle machinery, which he would never admit to, and the indignation he felt at the muggles accusations. The warring in his head prevented him from



feeling the slight warning that flashed through his mind. The two stepped into the elevator and it went down slowly.

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OooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooXoxXoooooooooooo
ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooXoxXooooooooooooooooooooO
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The atmosphere that met them once they reached the bottom of the lift left the boys momentarily stunned. They all had to immediately cover their ears. They were able to slowly get used to the sound, but the deep bass and the shrill screaming was slightly irritating.

“Come on!” Carla yelled over the din. “I’ve got some friends I want you to meet!” The three boys nodded and followed. Carla led them to a table in an upper balcony, away from most of the noise.

“Carla, your back! And I see you brought friends with you.” A young woman with blood red lips said, giving a lecherous grin to Draco, who while no stranger to girls, promptly gulped. Girls, as in Pansy Parkinson. Seraph smiled at the assembled women, until he noticed something strange. It was their auras. Muggles did not have auras. Seraph’s smile dropped quickly. He looked around, studying their auras and noticed while they looked like any wizard’s or witches’, there was also a deep red haze at the center and outside, even Carla’s, whose aura had just sprang up. ‘She must have been able to hide it like Dexter did.’ Seraph mused to himself.

“They look delicious...” Another girl said, this one a voluptuous red head.

“Draco, I think you read that burst of insight wrong.” Seraph said.

“Why’s that?” Draco asked.

“These aren’t muggles.” He told him. Draco tried to understand what was meant by that and Neville just looked confused.

“Wizards...even better.” Another girl said, and Seraph caught a flash of her teeth. They were white, unnaturally so, but they were sharp. Especially the top canines.

“Vampires...” Seraph breathed, causing the room to pause.

“Quick one he is...might make a good slave...” One of the girls muttered to another.

“A strong first kill for the princess...” Another said. Seraph drew his wand and saw Draco and Neville do the same. The lady vamps all stood up suddenly, their teeth elongating.

“Stop!” a slightly soft, yet commanding, voice said. The vampires still stood, but they made no motion to move. Draco and Neville lowered their wands down slightly, but Seraph felt the compulsion of the voice and maintained his stance, wand still poised.

“Who are you?” The voice asked, softer this time. Seraph tried to find where the voice was coming from, but could not see it.

“Who are we speaking to?” Seraph asked. His question raised many hisses from the female vampires. Apparently this was someone important. A few moments later a young woman, maybe no older than Seraph, walked into the room from out of nowhere.

“I am the princess of the Moon Clan. Who are you?” The young princess asked. She wore a thin veil that covered her mouth and nose. A hood covered most of her forehead, leaving only her bright blue eyes to be properly seen. Her deep black robes were regal looking and the material reflected purple in the chaotic lighting that was flashing through the screen separating the balcony to the rest of the club. Seraph noted the airy voice and her fluid movements. There was something off about her that stuck out in the back of his mind.

“I am Black.” He told her simply. She looked at him intently for a moment, before a slight smile could almost be seen through the veil.

“And they said you were dead.” The princess said. “But when do the wizards ever get anything right?” She asked herself softly. A soft sigh escaped her lips and Seraph noted the bright ends of her otherwise dark hair. Her aura flared slightly and Seraph saw the light blue and gold strands that made it up. The red haze that the others had was

not there; instead she had a deep red ball of light at the center of her aura. Red haze aside, her aura looked familiar, like he should know it.

“What are you talking about?” Seraph asked.

“Don’t play games with me, Mr. Black.” She said almost playfully. “I know who you are.” She said dreamily in a sing-song voice. Seraph heard an almost audible click in his head and looked at Neville sharply. The boy still looked bewildered. Seraph looked back at the princess and smiled in a lopsided, yet feral, manner. The odd grin confused the vampires for a moment before Seraph made his next comment.

“So, Luna, how has your summer been?”

And all hell broke loose.

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Hope you all enjoyed that. I did not get to where I wanted in this chapter (which was answering a few questions and the room of time) but I’ll make sure to get to them next chapter.

I thought that the ending was an interesting twist, plus an introduction to the vampires

Sorry that it took so long to update, I really don’t have an excuse past ‘life’. Had orientation at my new school, nice place, if a bit small. I was going to put a rant about Alpena, Michigan, but I decided against it. Nice place, really, but I don’t want to interact with anyone aside from my family up there. More like they don’t want to interact with me, but that’s a tangent I don’t want to get on to.

I had half of this chapter written for about three weeks before I could make myself write the rest of it. Really, I want to continue it, but I think it would make this chapter too long, and I don’t want another 15,000 chapter.

Allright, remember to Review. I want to thank all of those who have given me reviews even though I can't mention them by name. Personally, I think that rule about no author notes was made up by someone pissed off about reading a 30,000 word story, only to find half of it was author notes or something. I haven't seen anything in the rules (and I had to read through them again to post 'Magi Evolution' since they have been updated) about no author notes. Oh well.

Hope you all enjoyed, as I said above, Review, they help (and not just in motivation).

-Omni

Previously...

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## Chapter 18: Bloody Bonds

A loud explosion rocked the balcony and some of the vampires who were not thinking of disemboweling Seraph were looking around in fear. The music stopped, the lights shut off, and screams of terror and rage filled the air.

"Princess, we must leave. Now." A vampire to Luna's right said. Luna seemed hesitant to leave, but nodded and began to retreat with the other vampires to be stopped by the glass screen imploding. The lady vamps all took a defensive position, and it was easy to see why a moment later as seven people clad in black and red body suits jumped through the now broken screen. The black and red clad figures all rolled to their feet and came out standing with weapons drawn.

“Die, Vampire!” One of the figures said with a heavy Asian accent, as it raised the long katana it held in its hands. The sword came down, only to be blocked by a dagger of one of the vampires.

“Get the princess out!” Screamed one of them as the other vampires attacked the offending black clad people. Seraph was torn between wanting to stay and try to help Luna, and knowing that this did not involve him and was therefore not his problem. Seraph heard Draco say ‘Grims Keep’ and saw the dim flash of the necklace, before said necklace exploded, causing enough magical backlash to send Draco into the wall behind him.

“Guess that answers that question.” Seraph said to Neville.

“Looks like we have a fight, like it or not.” Neville said, still looking at the unconscious Draco. Neville quickly enervated him as a vampire right behind him was stabbed in the heart. Her body began to age rapidly until she turned to dust.

“Move!” Seraph shouted, pulling his black blade out and blocking a heavy swing from a glinting silver one. The attacker looked at the blade that had blocked his blow, then to the person holding it. The man jumped back about three feet and took a ready stance, not waiting for Seraph to get ready before he began to attack him. Seraph was able to evade the first attack and blocked the second, third and fourth, before succumbing to a fifth, right across his shoulder. His robe took the brunt of it, but it still hurt like hell. Seraph backed up, only to find himself up against a wall. Seraph could just feel the grin through his opponent’s hood. He backed up one more foot, until his leg was against the wall and used it as a platform to jump off of, swinging his blade at the head of the attacker. His blade was blocked as he landed on his feet behind the man, facing away from him. He could almost feel the man turn around and try to attack. Instead of turning around as well, Seraph lunged backwards, his sword pointed behind him, held between his arm and side. A gurgled gasp met him, and Seraph pulled his blade out sharply, feeling blood splatter across his back. He stood up and turned around, seeing the man with his blade still held high above him, ready to strike.

Meanwhile, Draco and Neville were having their own problems.

“Shit!” Draco said, as he had to jump to the side to avoid being struck by another sword wielding person. He shot off a ‘Stupefy’, but his attacker dodged it. He had to quickly put up a physical shield to block the next attack and wished he had brought his new rapier with him.

“Laceratus!” Draco shouted, swinging his wand in an arc. A thin red wave shot out of his wand to be blocked by the attacker’s sword. It left a nick in the metal. “Who are you people?” Draco asked in a panic, hoping to buy a little bit of time.

“We are something that you could not understand, little boy.” An accented feminine voice said. She swung at him again. “And after this, you won’t ever have to!” The women screamed as she seemed to gain a burst of speed, sending multiple slashes at Draco faster than he could see. Draco let out a pained growl as he tried to protect himself from the attack. After a moment, he realized that the sword had only struck him once, and that all the other blows had been deflected by a swirling, silvery shield. The women stepped back, confused by the shield. Draco acted quickly and punched the woman in the stomach as hard as he could, eliciting a loud ‘whump’ noise and a few cracks. The woman dropped to her knees, wheezing heavily. Before Draco could do anything else, he was thrown bodily into a wall by a flying black clad figure.

“Sorry, Draco!” Neville said. Up until a few seconds ago, he had been left alone. That changed when a burly man with a large club looking weapon stepped up to him. The man took a mighty swing at him and Neville tried to get out of the way, but failed. He ended up getting hit on his right forearm, instantly pulverizing the bone. Pain shot thru Neville like he could only remember in burnt memories. He let out a primal roar as he attempted to catch the man’s next attack, succeeding in grabbing the club in his left hand. The pain of more cracking bones was briefly ignored as he kicked the man in the chest, sending him over the woman that Draco was fighting, into Draco. Neville quickly stunned the two, only to find that they would not work on these people.

“Try this, Vercundus!” Draco said, shooting a bashing curse into the man’s head, leaving a large knot and possible brain damage, but it got the job done.

“Necto, Dormio.” Neville said, shooting a binding and sleeping spell respectively at the woman, rendering her unconscious and restrained.

“Still no backbone, eh Longbottom?” Draco asked snidely, wiping his brow of a stinging red substance that was getting into his eye, his blood. He had to jump out of the way quickly as a vampire came hurtling towards him, hitting the wall and turned to ash. Of the seven black and red robed people, five had been downed, while five more had arrived. Seven of the thirteen vampires had been killed. Piles of ash and a few extremely old looking dead bodies attested to this fact. The woman who had been trying to take Luna to safety was being held at the point of a sword, the rest of the vampires in similar situations.

“Our Master requests an audience with the young princess.” The man said the last word with utter contempt. The woman spat blood at his face. “My, my, such...spirit, from the... undead.” The man said as he backhanded the woman across the face. “When I said request, it was more of a demand, really. So hand over the little royal.” He said, pointing the blade into her throat, cutting her slightly.

“Crawl back to that shadow you call a master!” She yelled at him, spitting in his face once again. Seraph looked at Neville, who nodded. Seraph looked at Draco, and motioned to the situation happening not ten feet from them. Somehow the black clad fighters had forgotten about them, and their fallen allies. Draco stared stoically back. Seraph understood, this was not their fight, and they could escape now.

“They could work for Voldemort.” Seraph muttered as he looked at his blade and slashed at the air, sending flecks of blood towards the small group in front of them. The specks of blood hit one of the black fighters in the neck. The speck of blood was quickly followed by a black tanto. The blade was not designed to be used like that, and Seraph had not practiced with it, but it had worked out fairly well.



"This a private party?" Seraph asked. Next to him, Neville and Draco sent off banishing, bashing, and cutting hexes and curses at the assembled group, aiming at the black figures. Two more went down from a bashing curse to the head and another from a cut in the neck, courtesy of Draco and Neville. In the strike, one of the vampires had killed another man and two vampires were killed, leaving three of the black and red attackers and three vamps plus Luna.

"Little boys, this is no time to be playing hero." The man said as he threw his arm in front of them, sending Seraph, Draco, and Neville into the wall behind them. Neville passed out from the pain in his back, arm and hand and Draco tried to get up, succeeding in resting against the wall. Seraph had gotten up in a flash though, his sword at the ready.

"You don't work for Voldemort, do you?" Seraph asked. These people were no Death Eaters, and they weren't vampires or werewolves either. Seraph suppressed a shudder at the possible implications of a man with forces like these.

"Voldemort?" The man asked. "Ah, the Western Darkness... We are not associated... Though our causes seem to be... similar." The man said. Seraph nodded and attacked the man without preamble, catching him off guard. Seraph concentrated on nothing other than the man and the fight, the world slowing down around him. Sparks shot out as the swords clashed, again and again. He could not get any hits on the man, though he received a fair share of cuts and gashes across his coat and vest, many leaving deep gashes across his arms and chest and back. The man held his sword in one hand and threw the other towards Seraph, who was once again thrown back, but his feet landed against the wall and shot towards the man like a bullet. The man dodged, slicing into Seraph's back as he passed him. A stifled scream of pain rang out, the cut had gone through the coat and both vests, leaving a long deep cut across his back. Seraph turned around, his glasses long forgotten, his silver and emerald eyes blazing. The man only smirked and made a 'come hither' motion.

The world around Seraph had already slowed down, but now some of the color seemed to drain of the surroundings. He could hear his

breathing, his heartbeat, and the heartbeat of the man across from him. The Avada Kedavra green in his eyes were replaced by glowing silver, this time by his magic and not his metamorphmagus abilities. He brought his blade to the side of him in a low position and somehow felt a cold fire burning within the sword. The usual burning sensation he associated with his affinity met it, and black flames erupted across the blade. The man across from him only smirked wider, as his blade turned black with nearly invisible flames licking his sword.

“Tut tut, little Grims should be to bed by now. I suppose I’ll just have to put you down.” He taunted. Seraph just stared coldly at the man and attacked. His underhand arc was met with a block, sending small balls of fire everywhere. Even as the man was attacking him, new moves that he had never seen before were being assimilated into his mind and he wished he could just concentrate on fighting. They met each strike, but the man was slowly overpowering him. The man went for an overhead strike and Seraph saw his chance. He dropped to his knee, put his blade above him with one hand and shot a burst of black flame from the other. The black ball of fire hit the man’s right upper arm, stopping the attack. Within seconds, the arm had been severed and the amputated piece shriveling to ash quickly.

The man let out a howl of rage and pain and grabbed something from inside his robes and threw it down, causing smoke to rise from the ground. The other two people followed this example and threw down similar smoke objects. The smoke retreated back to where it came from, leaving nothing and no one behind. Seraph fell to his knees, the pain in his back, chest, and arms now in the forefront of his mind and exhaustion and severe blood loss was taking its toll on him. He stood up slowly, using his sword as a crutch, eyeing the Vampires warily as they discussed something in hushed tones that Seraph could not hear. He turned around and saw Draco leaning against the back wall, blood flowing down a gash at his right temple. It looked like he was trying to say something, but he barely had the strength to lean, let alone talk. Heavy blood loss was affecting him also. Neville had just been woken up a few seconds earlier and was wincing every once in a while from the multiple broken bones.

Seraph suddenly turned around faster than humanly possible and his sword stopped a mere centimeter from the neck of the vampire who had been guarding Luna.

"You...assisted us." The woman said reluctantly. It was evident to Seraph that this was a woman that prided herself on her fighting abilities. She had been bested and then saved. Saved by their food for all intensive purposes. Seraph would have smirked, if he was not fighting for consciousness. "And for that, you have our... gratitude." She forced out. Fierce whispering was heard behind the 'Guardian' that finished with an airy yet forceful voice saying 'I command it.' The whispering stopped immediately and the two vampires speaking to Luna walked over to Draco and Neville. Draco flinched as the vampire smeared her bloody hand across his cheek, and the other did the same to Neville.

"You going to be coming with us, Harry. I'm afraid if you don't, you will die. This won't hurt a bit." Luna told him in an oddly serious voice. She scraped her hand across one of her elongated fangs, cutting it. She smeared her blood across his forehead as Seraph fell to his knees. "Sorry, Harry, for what has happened and what will be done."

Seraph succumbed to the darkness that was clouding his mind.

"This is not wise, Princess." One of the three other remaining vampires said.

"Father will wish to thank them personally, human or not, and he cannot do that if they are dead." Luna said, grabbing Seraph before he hit his head on the floor.

"He is too far gone. The others may be helped with conventional means, but-" The lady vampire was cut off.

"He will survive, one way or another. He always does." Luna said before the group of vampires and human vanished without a sound.

Black-Ascension

Dark stone tiled the floors made up the ground, the peculiar sheen causing odd reflections from the fire that lit the area. The walls were roughly hewn from stone, small crevices carved out to hold giant candles. The ceiling of the vast room could not be seen, shadows covered it. A sound of running water could be heard from nearby, interrupted by periodic splattering. Figures in black suits with red sash and hoods kneeled, their heads bowed so low they were touching the ground. A large wooden stage-like structure stood in front of the prostrating group of people. On it sat a giant stone Buddha, and sitting between Buddha's crossed legs was a man dressed entirely in red, save for a black sash and hood. The relative tranquility of the room was interrupted when three clouds of smoke appeared in front of the red man. The smoke receded, leaving three men, two of which immediately took the same position all of the others in the room had. The third one did not.

This man was trying to muffle a scream, holding his, or what was left of it, arm. Smoke could still be seen coming off of it.

"Togashi, what is the meaning of this?" The red man asked. He had to yell to be heard over the racket the useless man was making. "Where are the others, and where is the princess!" The man asked in a cutting whisper that anyone present would have thought it was a shout.

"Nain Kushin" The man said, making a single sign with his hand. The man stopped screaming quickly, though now he looked hesitant. The numbing would end soon, and the pain would be back, twice what it was originally.

"Arigatou, Sensei." The no longer screaming man said with a slight bow. "We have failed." The man said simply.

"Explain." The Master said, keeping his hands held together to keep from killing the man with a few movements.

"We three are all that is left of the force to kidnap the Princess. The Banpaia that guarded the Princess were dealt with quickly, but they were not alone. There were also three Reigen were there also."

“Reigen?” The red man asked in disbelief. The Reigen were their greatest enemy, and the reason why they were forced to go underground once again a couple of thousand years ago. Numbers were up though, in recent years, but nothing like the stories of old. The Reigen were a disgrace, a mockery of the teachings of the sacred arts. And if the Reigen were a disgrace, then the Banpai were humiliation. Every step that they took was a slap in the face for the Shinobi. They were the creations of their greatest master, Knoxius, to be used as powerful, but lowly assassins. They were grunts, able to kill quickly, though usually they left a bloody mess, and did not need more than blood to survive. Blood was easily accessible, either from their targeted kill or from the pigs that were slaughtered each day. But their dependence on the Master slowly waned, having gotten a taste of life without servitude from long missions.

Soon, the Half-dead abominations had broken away from the command of their creator and had banded together to fight for their freedom. When the surviving child of Knoxius broke away from his heritage in favor of the lands and power that could be had in the west, the Shinobi had declared war on them. The child, Knox, had also killed their master, but that was to be expected. No weak man should retain power and the heir of Knoxius was obviously the stronger, or at least the smarter, of the two. Knox was expected to take over the Shinobi, but instead had killed or imprisoned any that were found. The Shinobi quickly regrouped in secret and struck back, but the two sided war took its toll on them, and the body count rose each day on both sides before the child of Knoxius and the Banpai joined together for their first and only open battle with the Shinobi. The fighting had been brutal and in the end, the Shinobi had been beaten back.

Knox had left for the new western world with his group of chosen, his ‘Guild of Grims’, his Reigen Girudo. The Banpai broke off into smaller groups and spread out over whatever lands they could. The remaining Shinobi hid amongst the populace, passing on their knowledge and training in secret, holding large meetings only once in a century. It stayed like this until they made their presence known, gathering power quickly and decisively. The Reigen had appeared once again and fought them back. Eventually the Shinobi went into hiding again, but over the last few hundred years, they had begun to gather in larger groups once more, until Shadokira; the ‘Shadow

Killer' became a master and rounded up all of the Shinobi under his banner.

Up until now, the Banpai were the only group that was aware that they had regrouped. Tonight's failed mission was critical; the Shinobi needed the Princess to break one of the stronger clans, the Moon Clan. If they could regain control over them then the other clans could be beaten into submission. Once the Banpaia were under their power, they could be used for their original purpose and Shadokira could maneuver himself politically over Asia while the Banpaia were terrorizing it.

"Hai, Sensei. There were three, and they fought with the Banpaia. I managed to dispatch two of them quickly, but the third one put up more of a fight. He was...untrained, though the battle intensified the longer it went on. I believe that he is their leader. He carried his blade."

"He carries the blade...interesting. If the Reigen are indeed gathering then we should soon be able to finally be done with them. Do you believe that they are allied with the Benpaia?"

"I do not know, Sensei. They fought for the Princess though, so it is a possibility." The man admitted.

"Tell me, Togashi, how this...untrained Reigen managed to take your arm?" The red clad man's hands were glowing with a dark energy. The man, Togashi shuddered.

"The leader is one with the black flame. I let my guard down and the boy took advantage of it." Togashi said, head bowed in shame. The pain was starting to return to his arm and he bit his tongue to not make a sound.

I hope for the loss of your arm, and that of your life, that you killed the whelp."

"His life force pooled the ground as we left, Sensei."

“Do not fail me again, Togashi, or your life will be forfeit.” The Master said, as he held up the palms of his hands. He made three gestures and the two men on either side of Togashi suddenly went rigid. Their backs began to curve at an unnatural angle until popping could be heard. The popping intensified into cracking a moment later and blood began to seep out of their mouths. The curving continued until loud snapping could be heard and blood began to pool around them from their mouths and from under their clothing. Finally, one of the men’s spines burst through the front of his neck, showering the area in blood, bone, and skin. The spine kept curving though, and soon snapped in half. The other man had yet to lose his spine, but his eyes filled with blood as they exploded and his spine also snapped in half.

“Do I make my self clear?” The Master asked. Togashi nodded, still eyeing the men next to him, his clothing covered in blood, amongst other things. “You have thirty six hours to heal, Togashi, and then you will be training. Obviously if you cannot defeat a boy without losing a limb, then you must not be training hard enough. Shenron will surely drive this point, I believe. Now be gone!” The Master said, moving his hand as if batting a fly away. Togashi was lifted off of his feet and sent careening backwards until he hit the door. He shakily got up and made his way towards the Isha. He had an arm to re-grow and he was sure that his back had broken from his forced exit.

## Black-Ascension

Snape smirked as he slowly stirred his cauldron. The Dark Lord would be most pleased with the progress he had made so far. This is what he loved. No matter how much he enjoyed torturing muggles and mudblood’s, a taste he had acquired early in his younger days and was now refining, it was never so rewarding as creating a potion. Not merely making a potion, anyone with half a brain and access to ingredients could make a potion. No, he was a master, a god among men in his field, he created potions. He could brew glory, bottle fame, and the rest of that rot he pushed onto his idiot students.

How the Dark Lord expected him to return to Hogwarts to teach, was beyond him. But his Lord willed it, so it would be done. Besides, he would be able to teach Defense against the Dark Arts, a subject that while not as interesting to him as Potions, was much more

manageable. A cauldron in the hands of children was lethal, a point that he tried to make in his classes. A shame no one had been killed yet. Longbottom surely would have been a victim of an unfortunate potions accident if it wasn't for that mudblood know-it-all Granger.

Snape let a cruel smile play across his lips. She would be less of a problem now though. Prolonged lack of free will does that to people. He had been the one to make the bonding potion as well as a key component in the ritual to seal her will to the Headmaster and the Weasley. The potion was designed to break the magical core slightly, a very painful process, while the ritual was used to transfer the will of the victim to those performing the ritual. Primary and secondary wills are imposed upon the victim, one with verbal control, the other with physical control. Weasley had performed his part incorrectly, allowing Snape to achieve partial control over the girl. The boy was unaware of the foul, but the old man knew, though Dumbledore seemed to smile at this. Probably glad that Weasley had less power than he thought.

Snape frowned.

The potion was like the Imperious Potion that he had created during the first rise of his Lord. Many of the components were the same, though not all. Most had to be substituted for more potent ingredients or things that would change the properties to better fit its victims, namely werewolves. The Imperious Potion was as good as a poison to most magical creatures. Centaurs had the interesting effect of losing all their hair before dying and house-elves simply exploded. Both were entertaining, though counterproductive. No, the abominations had to be able to survive a concentrated dose of the new potion to be effective.

He had started with his formula for the Imperious Potion and broken it down to its most basic parts and started from there. Rippler toe instead of Mermaid fin. Ashwinder eggs instead of Liquid Salamander. The list went on and on, but it was at this point in the potion where things would start to come together to make what he wanted. Snape stirred in an erratic figure eight while he lightly dusted the top of the potion with a powdered substance. The potion went from a dull brown



colour to a dull green. He gave another stir and set his instrument down, five minutes of simmering before he could do anything else.

It had to be non-poisonous to werewolves, while being able to break through their natural mental defenses. There were potions that could do that on their own, but they were temperamental and went bad quickly, not to mention they were generally laced with a poison themselves. The poison, while mild, does its job by lowering the immunities before it attacks the mind. The Mentis Potion, a potion designed to weaken mental defenses over time, was long lasting, the main ingredient, Occamy skin, lasted for decades. The potion took over a week to take full effect though, that too because of the Occamy skin and because it was one of the few non-poisonous 'Mind Breakers' as they are called. 'Dementor blood might work' He mused. 'It would instill fear of the Dark Lord as well. If this potion does not work then I will ask for fresh Dementor parts. Anything that can break mind shields that easily must have their power based in Legilimencey...' Snape thought to himself as he searched for the jar that he was looking for. He found it with little difficulty.

Snape added the Occamy skin, piece by piece, stirring with each. Soon the potion turned from a murky green to a bright green. Snape dropped over an ounce of dried and shredded Giant's heart to the potion, turning it to a vile looking red before he immediately turned off the flame and blew powdered Opaleye Dragon horn over it, making it nearly as clear and translucent as water.

Snape smirked.

While the potion would take longer to affect then he would like it to have, and he was sure it was far too long for his master, it was progress. Giants, while dreadfully slow and dimwitted were amazingly powerful in strength, rivaling an adolescent Dragon most the time. While they did not have any real magic, they were highly resistant to it, which made their body parts sometimes useful as ingredients. The heart was the most powerful and it would add to the strength of the potion, hopefully cutting down the time it would take for the Occamy skin to work. The Dragon horn was used in Veritaserum to give it the colorless and odorless attributes that it was noted for. Few masters

could get the consistency needed to make a potion of theirs clear, but Snap was proud to boast he was one of them.

This potion, if nothing more, was non-poisonous and more powerful improvement over his original Imperious Potion. The tardiness of the potion might actually be beneficial, for use on enemies, as it would probably take more than three days for it take effect, the administrator would not be caught. It would also last longer than the previous potion, though the original worked faster. He would experiment with using Dementor parts later. The Dark Lord had just received a few werewolves that had displeased him.

'Test subjects' Snape thought with sadistic glee. It was too bad that he could not use that abomination, Lupin, yet. But he planned on using the bastard for his final potion.

### Black-Ascension

"Quickly, inform father of the attack and find the healer." Luna said to head guard, Shea. Shea nodded her head once and moved faster than most eyes would catch. Things had not gone well this night. They had attacked, something that had not happened for centuries. She had been told, of course, about them and the war, but she hoped that they would never rise again. One war was enough and she feared for her clan if both they and Voldemort discovered them. Her musings were cut short, however, when a pair of heavy double doors burst open and cracked against the wall. Her father and two women in white rushed in as well as his guard.

"Check my daughter for injuries, Dominic, take those three to the dungeons. I will not have my daughter's attackers go unpunished." Oddarious Amorbone, King and Master of the Moon Clan commanded.

"Father." Luna said, her voiced drowned out over her father's shouting.

"Clean them up; I don't want them dead before I can kill them."

“Father” Luna said, louder this time, but her father had shifted to his ‘Commander’ mode as she had dubbed it when she was younger.

“Cells three and seven. And you, Shea! Tell me, how is it that three children were able to kill so many of your personally trained guard?” He demanded, a nonexistent but violent wind tugging at the bottom of his cloak.

“Well, you see, sir...”

“Daddy!” Luna finally shouted, her magic amplifying her voice until it rattled that walls and everyone stopped in their tracks.

“Yes?”

“They did not attack us, they saved us. Do not take them to the dungeons, they need medical attention and he will die if we do not do anything soon.” Luna said, visibly upset at the last part.

“They...saved you? Right... Medics!” He shouted, until he turned around and saw them. “Take them to the Med-Bay, do what you can.” The man sniffed the air and seemed to concentrate for a moment. “Luna, there is nothing that you can do for—” But he was cut off by his daughter, her normally placid blue eyes lit with an oddly blue fire.

“He is my friend, one of my only friends. He saved us, saved me, and this wasn’t the first time. He will live.” Luna said vehemently, so unlike her usual self. Oddarious wondered what the boy had done, besides aiding in defeating an attacker of hers, to instill such a loyalty to him in his daughter. She had only spoken about her friends once, and this boy did not match the descriptions he could remember. He was left wondering in the atrium as the medics and his daughter made their way to the Med-Bay. He would make sure to keep an eye on the boy, all of three of them, actually.

“Your Highness, your father was right. We can heal his wounds, but not before he dies of blood loss. At the rate he is going, he will have no blood, and we don’t carry blood replenishing potions, they don’t work on us like they do for wizards.” One of the medics told her when they reached large room. Luna did not say anything; she just gave a

sad sort of smile and muttered something under her breath that the healer did not catch.

Luna rolled up the sleeves of her cloak and pulled out a small metal curved object. The intricately designed blade depicted a raven in flight through stormy skies. Before the healers could stop her, she placed the bottom of the blade at her elbow and sliced to her middle finger deeply. Pain was the first sensation she felt as she cut, quickly replaced by a feeling of cold fire and slight lightheadedness. She let the blood gather in her palms and began chanting softly. The healers stared in shock as she took her own blood and smeared it across all of the black haired boy's cuts. The cuts glowed softly before the blood congealed and they started to close slowly with a faint hiss. Her own cut had begun to heal already and she made another parallel laceration centered at her wrist. She held the cut at his mouth, forcing the blood inside and stroking his throat to make him swallow. A black mist hovered above the table before it shot into both of them and Luna passed out.

One of the healers checked Luna over quickly before she got to work on healing the flaxen boy. He too had lost blood, but not anywhere close to the other boy, as well as having minor spinal damage. He would be in pain for a while, but would survive after she got done with him.

"Should we have stopped her?" The other healer asked.

"It was a dangerous thing to do, no doubt, but do you really think we could have stopped her once she had her mind made up? We didn't know what she was doing until she started that chant. No, she would have done it anyway. The way she spoke to her father...Such fire in her I have not seen since the Mistress was killed." She said, waving an oddly white wand over the blond child. The other healer smiled slightly, revealing a set of shining white teeth and two sharper than normal canines.

"That boy is something special to her, you think?"

"Perhaps. I'll have to speak with her later. She's not confided in me since before she went to that school. I don't know why the Master

sent her there; she would not have to hide herself at Durmstrang or even Beauxbatons, though I do detest the French vampires. They believe themselves to be so...slick, so greasy. May, I remember a particular fellow named Mortimer who believed he could woo me with a 800 year old bottle of mortal's blood. Claimed it was Julius Caesar's! "

"Your rambling, Dia." May said, looking at the head healer in sympathy. It had been a harsh blow to her when the princess had become more distant, finding acceptance in obscure books of magical creatures instead of her long time Nanny.

"Hmm... I suppose I am...I just hope the princess knows what she has done." Dia said.

## Black-Ascension

"I call this meeting of the Order of the Phoenix to attention." Albus Dumbledore said as he tapped his wand against the table, eliciting a loud gable noise as well as some sparks. Albus Dumbledore, the leader of the light, and all around good guy looked old. Well, that is to say that the man was old, over a 150 at least, but he looked every year of it at the moment. The Order calmed down and Albus sighed before taking his seat.

"Kingsley, what do you have from the Ministry?" He asked the tall bald man. Kingsley cleared his throat and stood up, gaining the attention of the room.

"I have been looking through some of the new recruit and a couple of the senior Auror's files. I've found three new recruits and a couple of the seniors who, based on their history, may be interested in joining us. There are a few outside of the force that may be interested as well. EricMunch, he checks the wands in the Atrium at the Ministry, has offered to inform us of anything suspicious. We would have to give him a list of known and suspected Death Eaters to look out for and inform us if they come in as a group or at odd hours. Mr. Perkins from the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts has also expressed interest to Arthur. Basil Tipp of the Department of Magical Transportation has offered to report anything off and to give us emergency portkeys if we

need them. He suspects Madame Edgecombe to be monitoring fire calls and passing the information on to Death Eaters.” Shacklebolt finished and sat down.

“Very good. While it is not difficult to create the portkeys, it is a rather bothersome task. They won’t be traced in any manner as well.” Dumbledore said thoughtfully. “Continue with your search for new members within the Ministry and ask those who you believe may be interested to attend a meeting with me in two weeks.” He told Kingsley, who nodded. “Nymphadora, have you found anyone outside of the Ministry who may wish to join us?”

Tonks scowled at the old man.

“No, not much. No one really believes that V-vol...you-know-who has returned.” She cursed herself in her head. She just could not say the name, but she was working on it. With Remus’ help and, ehem, encouragement. The man was quiet the animal and had changed her opinion on a few subjects. She was pretty sure that the Marauders had studied more than useful pranking material. She shook her head slightly. “If I were to try and convince them that he was back then it is possible that I would lose whatever standing I have in certain circles. One or two of the people that I have spoken with might believe that he is back, but they don’t have a vested interest either way and would either leave or claim neutrality should it prove true.” Tonks finished. Dumbledore sighed, that same sigh that had broken many troublesome students, dissolved Hufflepuffs to tears, and had convinced the Minister of Magic that his way was best numerous times. It was his ‘I’m not mad, I’m disappointed’ sigh.

“Thank you, Nymphadora. Standing or no, I wish you would apply yourself more to our cause.” Dumbledore said somberly and Tonks almost felt compelled to feel ashamed until she shook her head again. She had nothing to feel ashamed for and wondered if the old man could magically charge his words. If so, she was glad that she had started to strengthen her mind shields at Remus’ suggestion. He had been working with the Twins as well. She sat down, scowling at her bit of table in front of her.

“Now, Remus. I believe that you are heading up the search for Mr. Longbottom. How is that going?” Dumbledore asked the werewolf. He was concerned with his former student’s recent behavior. Ever since Potter’s death he had continued to become more and more agitated, going so far as to argue with him about going to see the Werewolves. Remus stood up.

“Headmaster, Mr. Longbottom is the Head of his family, thereby making him an adult. Within the law, he can do and live what and wherever he pleases. His grandmother assured us that he is staying at a home with adequate wards, and coming from Madame Longbottom, they would have to be extremely strong to earn her approval. I do not understand why-” But Remus was cut off from commenting any further.

“Remus, your report.” The Headmaster said in a voice that conveyed untold irritation.

“Of course, Headmaster.” Remus said stiffly. “The Weasley twins, Diggle, Dung and I have been asking around to see if anyone has seen him recently. We have been trying to get in contact with the boy’s friends. Three of his, supposed,” The last was said under his breath, “friends reside in this house and know no more than the rest of the Order, another, Ms. Lovegood, is unavailable on holiday, and Harry can’t really comment.” Remus said with a fixed smile, his voice carrying a slightly hysteric undertone as he ran his hand through his hair. Several gave him pitying, some even understanding looks. Alive or not, he still worried for the boy, his cub. Outbursts like that helped to give the allusion of mourning to the right people and let out some stress. Tonks would help him with the rest of his stress, later.

Dumbledore nodded, which was no comfort, before continuing.

“Does anyone else have anything to add?” He asked benignly. Moody nodded from the corner and stepped into the light, his face in profile, highlighting his several scars and lack of proper nose.

“There was a report of a vampire attack at a muggle club.” He said, and several people gasped. “However, we are unsure of what actually happened. Ashes were found and were tested; several

vampires were killed, as well as what we first believed to be Death Eaters. They weren't though, but match the description of an assassin group from Asia. The problem is, this group has not been seen for centuries. A contact I have in Japan says that they are highly trained in the martial arts, blades, Jutsu and some general magic. He suggests killing any that we see, if we can handle them." Moody said. He had a bad feeling about these people. Vampires could be dealt with, they were difficult to kill, but they knew their weaknesses. These assassins were an unknown.

"Jutsu?" Hermione asked from beside her boyfriend, somewhere in the back. It pained her to have to ask about something but took heart in the confused looks everyone seemed to have.

"Yes...Jutsu." Dumbledore started; a worried glint in his eye. "It is a branch of magic that most of us have lost the ability to perform. There are three, maybe four different branches within the art I believe. It is extremely powerful, though like the ancient magic, requires concentration and time. I myself never chose to pursue this branch of magic, as it is generally impractical, because of the time that it takes, and I know of no one who is skilled enough in it to teach. Most people who might see a jutsu used would believe that it is wandless magic, which technically it is, requiring hand signs to focus the magic. The only use of jutsu I have seen was to duplicate ones self for a short period of time to attack more times then possible. If what your contact says is true, Alastor, then this is truly worrying." Dumbledore finished, looking pensive. Many of the surrounding members of the Order nodded their heads. The silence was of course interrupted.

"They are slow, even if this juju stuff is powerful, they should not be able to hit us if they are just standing there. I don't see what the big deal is." Two guesses as to who said that. Dumbledore sighed, once again. It was not for the first time that he wanted to just kill the boy.

"Because, Weasley," Moody said coldly, "They fight without the need of wands, so their means of magic cannot be taken away. And from what I hear, they would not need to use magic to kill you twelve ways before you could blink. Witnesses from that muggle club never mentioned any unusual lights coming from the fighting, indicating that they did not use their magic to fight the vampires. Vampires, Weasley,



are almost as strong as Werewolves and are much faster. Use of weapons or not, these assassins fought and killed several vampires, only losing a few themselves.” Moody growled, both eyes locked on the Weasley boy’s, making the redhead squirm. Others seemed to have had the same thought as the boy and paled considerably at what Moody said.

“We will need to contact the Vampires to see if this was an isolated incident and look into the possibility of Voldemort gaining these assassin’s as allies.” Dumbledore said.

“I’ll see what I can do.” Moody said. Black needed to know of this and he knew a few people in Knochturn that might be able to gain him an audience with one of the more influential Vampires. Dumbledore smiled slightly and started to speak again.

“I am sure that you are all aware of what will be happening in the coming week and a half.” He said, his gaze sweeping across the room, giving the people the impression that he actually cared about each and every one of them. He suppressed a smirk, the appearance of caring was almost as good as the real thing, and these sheep couldn’t tell the difference even if he told them.

“The Cannon’s game?” Ron asked stupidly from somewhere in the back. Dumbledore suppressed a groan. These children were losing their usefulness quickly with Potter gone and the Longbottom boy missing. He would personally get involved with the search soon, it was imperative that Longbottom be found and trained.

“No, Mr. Weasley. Though I do hear that they have the same chances of winning as a dragon does of getting tamed.” Dumbledore said with a fake smile, which Ron returned, now fully assured that his team would win and somehow go on to the world cup. The boy had the intelligence of a flubberworm, and probably would not have learned anything if it was not for Granger shoving information down his throat.

“No, the will reading for the late Mr. Black is to be held on the 13th of this month. Gringotts has informed me that Mr. Potter’s will is going to be held on the same day.” Dumbledore said sadly, though his eyes were twinkling merrily. This comment was met with mixed reactions.

“Harry had a will? Wonder what we’ll get, better be his Firebolt...”  
Weasley, of course.

“He should have asked me for help if he was going to make a will...”  
Granger.

“Poor dear, with as reckless as he was I’m glad he had the thought to look ahead...” Mrs. Weasley.

“...” Tonks, the twins, and Moody. Remus growled, stopping people from commenting further.

“How can you people act like this!” He demanded. “Like this is something to celebrate. Sirius and Harry were both good men who did not deserve the lives that they were given. You people sit here, claiming to have been their friends, their family, Harry’s at least, and yet at their death, you care more about what they left you.” He said, looking directly at Hermione, Ron, and Mrs. Weasley, and a few of the other Order members. “Or what plans have been ruined.” He said in a frigid voice, looking directly at Dumbledore. The old man looked momentarily shocked, before his face settled into an emotionless mask, leaving only burning anger in his eyes. “I only wish I could have seen your games and half-truths before Harry died, or been more adamant in your treatment of Sirius. You disgust me Dumbledore, you and this Order.” He stood up quickly, making his chair shoot backwards into the wall.

“I’m through with this Order of Hypocrites.” He said with the utmost conviction in his voice. He looked subtly at the twins, who nodded slightly as Tonks stood up next to him. He looked towards Dumbledore, catching Moody’s eye. The maimed man gave a slight smirk but made no move. Remus nodded once to him, and then again for himself. “Right.” He said curtly to no one and made his way to the Floo, Tonks and the Twins following him. Most of the Order were too shocked to do anything, and Dumbledore was going to let them leave, until he realized that he actually needed Remus.

“Mr. Lupin.” He called, getting up from his seat. “Obviously you are suffering from the loss of you ‘pack’ as well as from the moon. I

implore you to retake your seat. Severus may have a potion to help you.” Dumbledore said. Snape had not attended this meeting but he had been told from the surly potions master that he was being kept busy making various potions, some involving werewolves, though he had no details.

“Sod off.” The incensed werewolf said as he jumped into the swirling green flame of the hearth and Dumbledore saw that he was the last through. The old man’s hands clenched. He had just lost his only contact to the werewolves. ‘Damn’ He thought furiously. Several sparks shot from his wand which was in its wrist holster and the house shook and swayed, his odd aura coming forth slightly. Dumbledore quickly composed himself and walked back to the kitchen, leaving behind a cracked indentation in the floor.

### Black-Ascension

The lights were dim in a large cream colored room, not that the occupant of the room noticed. He was out cold and had been that way for nearly two days now. His two companions had been deemed fit enough to leave the Med-Bay and were currently in the auxiliary dining area. The Master had asked them not be questioned, or given information, he would do it personally, and they had not seen anyone since they had been brought here except some of the house elves and the princess. The princess, though reluctant, had informed them that their companion was still recovering and that they would see him soon. Until then, they were to use the house-elves for anything that they should need. They were tense though, she could understand that. She would have done more then tear up a room after finding out they were being essentially detained with little to no information like the larger one had. The smaller blond had remained quiet; choosing to take in his surrounding, probably looking for a way out. After he had tried to use a portkey they were searched for anything else and found another portkey and their wands.

There was something odd about these...children, the lithe vampire thought to herself from a shadow in the corner.

The three had been brought in, actually brought into the castle, by the princess of the clan and the rest of her guards. Such an event was

unprecedented, no one brought anyone into the castle, especially not...humans. The master had been distraught at learning of an attack on his daughter. He had believed that the three had been the one's responsible, a foolish conclusion in her opinion. Though the idea of mortals defending vampires was equally outrageous to her, especially considering how weak they looked. Although the large one seemed to have something in the way of strength, if the hole in the wall and the broken bones that one of the guards had received after taking their wands. It took two guards to subdue both of them and no one had been unscathed.

She laughed softly.

The mortals had sustained moderate to heavy damage from what she could see when they were brought in with the princess and her guard. Whatever strength that they had, she could tell from the injuries that they had received that they were obviously untrained. The large one had a few broken bones and a severe concussion, but not much else. He would have survived on his own, and in her opinion, should have been left wherever it was that they found them. The blonde child had been slightly worse off, suffering from a concussion, slight spinal damage and heavy blood loss. The blood had to be regenerated naturally, and he was placed in a light healing coma. The spinal damage had been fixed with a nerve regeneration potion and they boy had walked out the next day feeling lightheaded. The last one though, the one that she was currently studying while he slept, had had the worse damage. When he was brought to the castle, the smell of his blood permeated every room, making many (herself included) yearn for a taste. It was surprising that the boy was alive at all, considering how much blood he had already lost and the dripping trail he had left leading to the Medical Bay. She was not sure of exactly how the boy had survived, but she knew that the healers could not have done it. That left the only other person admitted into the ward.

The princess seemed to actually be concerned with her 'savior'. But then again, the princess had never conformed to the way most vampires were. No, the princess was for lack of a better word...odd. The Master had his eccentricities as well though. What self respecting vampire, a Master no less, would spend their time relaxing by writing mostly fictional literature in the form of a newspaper for

mortal wizards to scoff at. She walked over to the boy's bed. He seemed slightly different then when he was brought in, besides the unfortunate lack of blood covering his body.

"Perhaps there is something she sees in you...besides the obvious. My... you do look delicious..." She purred to his prone form. She smiled wickedly, her overly sharp canines lengthening slightly. "Just a little taste..." She said, mostly to herself. Her line of thought, as well as her slowly descending mouth was stopped at the same time. A hand gripped her throat faster then she could move, taking her by surprise. She tried to wrench the hand from around her throat, but was unable to. She looked past the hand and arm until she realized that she was being held by the boy she was about to take a bite out of. He was no longer in a state of comatose but alert. She was slowly lifted into the air, her feet dangling about an inch above the ground, as he got out of the bed. She looked into his eyes and saw an intensity there that she had not seen outside of the Master's. The burning green and silver eyes flashed as she was slammed against the wall.

In her over 300 hundred years of 'life', she had only known fear a few times. From her father, from the Master, and from Dementors when she was unlucky enough to encounter one. A brief thought about the impossibility of the situation passed through her mind. This was a mortal, the thought of one of them being as strong, possibly stronger, then her...No. No matter how strong he was, he should not be able to hold her in the way he was currently. She let out a gasp of pain as she was slammed into the wall once more and a growl met her ears.

"I said answer me." Seraph said in a fierce whisper. The woman he held by the throat looked momentarily confused. 'Probably didn't even hear me.' Seraph thought to himself. "Since you can't seem to grasp the concept of multiple questions, we'll try one at a time. I'll go first, who are you?" His tone was frigid, and though his eyes were intense, his voice did not affect her as much as it would someone not used to chilling voices of displeasure. She sneered at him.

"I will tell you nothing. You will be killed, you pathetic mortal, for daring to lay a hand against-" Her condescending comments were cut off as her throat became much more constricted.

“Wrong answer, bitch. Now answer the damn question.” Seraph said. The last thing that he could remember was fighting...someone. He was pretty sure that it was not the vampires, though he thought that they wanted to drain him and the others. No...there were people there as well, dressed in black, but not Death Eaters, that much he was sure. The way that they fought, hand to hand and with weapons. No, no self respecting Death Eater would stoop to ‘muggle means’ to get the job done. They weren’t even English from what he could tell. He and their leader had fought; he could still recall the pain from the cuts and noticed the stiffness in his muscles for the first time. He had been defeated, cut down. His cloak was probably in ribbons. He smirked; he got the man’s arm at least. The woman glared at him and he refocused his attention on her.

“Lea, and I live here.”

“Now was that so damn difficult? What am I doing here?”

“You have enough information, mortal. Release me at once!” She screamed at him. Seraph sighed.

“You have a real superiority complex, you know that? I’ll put it like this; there is an easy way and a hard way to do this. For the sake of your mind, you should choose the former. Personally I hope you choose the latter.”

“You would not dare. My mind shields would shred you apart!” She screeched. Seraph thought about it for a moment before he slammed her head into the wall, dazing her. She was probably right, but mind defenses could be lessened if the mind was in pain or other states of distress. He reached for his wand, only to realize that he did not have it. Despite his position, he was in unknown territory, alone, and without his wand, or his portkey it seemed, after he checked for it too, and left him with a cold feeling in his chest.

“Fuck it.” He said to himself as he focused his will. He felt a slight pressure behind his eyes and they burned almost painfully as he thought clearly, ‘Legilimens!’ The boy’s oddly glowing eyes suddenly sharpened into a gaze that would make one feel as if they were

looking into your soul, and past it. He had yet to try Legilimencey after his gift had unlocked and was not sure what to expect. His probe felt both more solid and slightly gaseous, if such a thing were possible, able to form different shapes to get past obstacles. He quickly came to a large barrier ward that surrounded the entire mind. As such, it was relatively weak and he cut through it like it was paper. Several more wards were met, each increasing in strength until he found one that he bounced off of. He gathered his strength and flattened his probe until it was like a needle and shot into the barricade, leaving the ward still up but with a small hole in it. All of the others had been brought down as he crashed through them. It was painful, if her reaction of rolling her eyes into the back of her head was anything to go by. He finally came to a small castle. 'Who are you, Where am I, What am I doing here, How long have I been here, Why was I brought here, Where are the others?' He threw the questions at her mind and was rewarded with information, memories, and snippets of thought.

Her name was Lea, and she did live here. What she failed to mention was that she was one of the King's 'aides', more like she was indebted, by money or life he wasn't sure, to the man and was paying it off by being a servant. More than that, she was there to be 'at his service' once he woke up. Taking him to his companions was part of her job as well as answering basic questions. More information was supposed to be given to him during his audience with the 'King'.

Apparently 'here' was a castle...Moon Clan Castle, to be precise. From her memories he gathered that the castle was several thousand years old and was the original stronghold for the...first vampires? He had always thought that vampires had always existed alongside people, but apparently they were created, though she did not know by whom. 'Instruments of war... Aren't we all?' He thought ruefully. After the fight they were brought to the castle, by Luna, and this particular vampire didn't quite like that fact. He found information on the 'King'. He was the owner of the castle and with his clout, had earned the title 'King', along with being the leader of the Moon Clan gave him the title of 'Master'. King Oddarious Amorbene, Master of the Moon Clan. Draco and Neville had been healed...and were being kept in the dark about...everything, apparently. Not only that, their wands and portkeys had been taken as well. Seraph smirked as he saw Neville

breaking one of the vampire's bones through the vamps memories. He dug deeper at information concerning him. He had been asleep for over two days now, almost three. He was shocked to find out that he probably should have died from blood loss. Luna seemed adamant that he would survive, and Lea suspected that the princess had used some sort of...blood magic? Yes...blood magic, magic emphasizing the use of chants to magically charge the blood to be used in a number of applications from wards, runes, weapons, and enchantments amongst other things. Lea was not particularly adept at this branch of magic and did not know much more about it. Whatever had been done, he had lived, and he was sure that it was because of Luna.

Seraph grimaced.

He had never really thought about the people that he had saved, but they were in his debt. If he thought about, he had several. Granger, the youngest Weasley, Arthur Weasley, Buckbeak (if magical creatures could be in debt), and there were probably more indirectly. Now he owed someone his life, and it was not a feeling that he liked. Growing up, the Dursley's convinced him that he actually owed them something until he realized that they were full of shite and should burn in hell if such places existed. Personally, he hoped that there was, if nothing more then so the Dursley's could enjoy the rest of eternity in a special corner reserved just for them. He pulled out of the woman's mind. She was beginning to regain her senses and had started to push him out. Rather than fight her, he let her do it.

He released her from his hold and she slide down the wall.

"Take me to my friends." He commanded. She looked at him with an indignant expression. Seraph sighed. 'Be that way then.' He thought. 'Legilimens' He said in his mind again. His probe was met with active resistance this time, but he still managed to gain the layout of the castle. He left her there, lying against the wall in the infirmary as he made his way to where he knew his friends to be.

(Black Ascension)



“Seraph?” Neville asked, standing up abruptly from his seat. Draco looked up lazily from the bed he was laying in and muttered something about it being ‘about time’.

“Neville, Draco, seems you two have been detained and withheld information in my absence.” Seraph said as he stepped into the room fully.

“And took our damn wands.” Draco added as he sat up.

“I got one of them good for it too.” Neville said proudly.

“Come on, we need to get our stuff and get out of here. One of them wanted to take a bit out of me before I could wake up. I don’t take kindly to being made a meal. If it wasn’t for the fact that she seems to hate ‘mortals’, Draco, you two would get along swimmingly.” Seraph said, smirking at the disgusted look on the boy’s face. They left the room quickly, keeping to the shadows when they could.

“Where is our stuff?” Draco asked.

“Not sure. The vamp I ‘interrogated’ didn’t know.” Seraph said evenly.

“Interrogated?” Draco asked with a slightly sadistic smirk on his face.

“In a manner of speaking.” Seraph said as he suddenly stopped. He had not seen, nor smelled, or even heard anything. It was more of a sense, the hairs on the back of his neck standing at attention and an anxious type feeling in his hands. He looked towards Draco, who had also stopped a second after him. Draco nodded slightly, and began looking around. Neville continued on, not sensing anything was wrong.

“So, where are we?” Neville asked as he came out of a shadow to a larger room.

“That would be Moon Castle.” A voice coming from everywhere said. The dark room suddenly filled with vampires and torches came to life along the walls. The three boys stopped where they were, looking around defensively. Seraph stepped forward.

"I demand an audience with the Master of the Moon Clan." Seraph said imperiously. The Vampires were trying to scare them. Never show weakness to a possible enemy.

"And why should I grant audience to one who attacks my servants?" The voice from everywhere and nowhere said again.

"Perhaps if you kept your pets on a leash, they would not feel the need to bite defenseless people. People who are at you oh so gracious hospitality." Seraph said the last bit sarcastically, a sneer across his face.

"Not so defenseless if you could leave my 'pet' in such a state." The voice countered.

"So you approve of her attempting to bite a guest?"

"No, I do not." The voice said, suddenly in front of Seraph, who restrained himself from taking a step back. "And she has been properly reprimanded for the act. It is most curious that beings such as your self could over power a trained vampire...As much as your people have been kept in the dark, we have as well. My daughter refuses to speak with me, because of you and our hospitality, and will not tell me of you or your companions. So, I feel I must ask, who are you?" The man said, looking at the three with a slightly amused expression. Seraph tensed, and the two behind him did as well. As much as he had explained to them what the Guild was, he had not told them his place in it, nor their's. The Guild was based off a hierarchy, and the Black's had always been the leader ever since the beginning, with the possible exception of the heir not being ready to take the station. In that case the most skilled would take the position. Black's were always the head because they had the potential of mastering any of the skills that the other's specialized in. Once he had, he could truly call himself a Master Assassin. As it was, he was good at a little bit of everything, but had mastered nothing. That left him with his title within the Guild.

"And yet you do not introduce your self...Very well, King Oddarious Amorbene, Master of the Moon Clan..." He stopped though and tried

to suppress a laugh, succeeding in only letting out a small snicker. Amorbene. Amor-Bene.

“Something funny, child?” The King asked, bristling.

“No, nothing, Mr. Lovegood.” Seraph said with a hint of a smile. The King just stared at him, and eventually sighed, but could not help but crack a small smile as well.

“I have been found out...my daughter did tell me that it would be too obvious. However, few would bring up the fact, or believe that a Master would entertain themselves in such a matter...And you still have not answered my question.” He finished coldly to Seraph’s smirk.

“I am Seraph Orion Black, Lord and Head of the Black family, Alpha Grim.” A silence fell on the vampires. Some looked slightly confused; others showed the barest hint of recognition. Seraph assumed that these were the truly old vampires, Elders, possibly. “My companions, Draconis Lucius Malfoy, Lord and Head of the Malfoy family, Alpha Advisor and Chief Grim and Neville Franklin Longbottom, Lord and Head of the Longbottom Family, Alpha Advisor and Chief Grim.” Seraph finished. He could feel the surprise from the boys behind him, but they did not let it show. The King had a faraway look in his eyes and Luna gasped quietly.

“I knew you would find yourself eventually, Seraph.” A light voice said, the owner slowly making her way from behind the vampires. Mr. Lovegood looked at his daughter with another look. He then looked to the assembled vampires.

“Leave us.” He told them. Immediately the group dissipated to parts unknown. The King made a snapping like gesture with his finger and thumb, but instead of sound, a drop of blood fell and landed with a light splatter on the ground. He held his hand over the blood on the ground and it glowed briefly, before light spread from where the blood was and spread until every inch of the room glowed a light blue color. The glow suddenly receded back to its starting point and the drop of blood disappeared. Seraph could not help but be impressed. Neville looked in disbelief and Draco tried to remain impassive, and failing.

Luna smiled briefly. Her father was a master in the use of blood magic.

“We will not be interrupted or heard.” The man said, and sat down suddenly, on nothing, apparently. “Ah.” He said apologetically, and took out a dark red wand the color of blood and conjured seats for Seraph, Neville, and Draco. Luna was sitting on a chair that seemed to be made out of a wet and moving substance. “I had assumed that you were more adept at your elemental abilities, no offense.” The man said.

“Elemental abilities?” Neville Questioned.

“Well of course, they’re written in your aura. Earth is strong within you, though it is not yet realized fully. You two,” He said, indicating Draco and Seraph, “Know your elements, your affinities if you will. And you, young Alpha. It is a rare thing to see dual elements.”

“Duel?” Seraph asked. It was irritating that the man seemed to know so much. He really needed to learn how to shield his aura as Dexter had if he was going to keep running into powerful people.

“Yes, dual elements. One you were born with, but the other was gifted by a rather loyal familiar. I, like you, have the shadow element. As versatile as air or water and I personally believe it to be much more useful than any other. Though I may be slightly biased.” Mr. Lovegood said. “Neither of you know how to use them though. Shadow Walking is almost natural, Mr. Black, but there is so much more...” He trailed off, holding out his hands and concentrating. All the light in the room seemed to gather at his hands and it too slowly disappeared, leaving the room in absolute darkness. Suddenly the light was released and everyone but the King, whom the technique did not affect, or Luna, who knew what was going to happen and closed her eyes, were temporarily blinded.

“Amazing...” Seraph breathed as he regained his sight. Mr. Lovegood chuckled.

“I have not thanked you or your companions for saving my daughter, and though they will not admit it, her guard as well. You cannot be

taught how to use your elements, as it is slightly different from person to person how they achieve certain results. Most simple things can be explained, and through practice, obtained. But the more advanced techniques, like what I did earlier, are self taught. In thanks, I will give you this book,” He said, holding out an empty hand. Quickly though, a swirl of darkness filled it up and then disappeared, leaving a thin book simply entitled ‘Element’. Seraph studied the outside of the book and tried to see if there was anything off about it. It had a slight magical aura that made him feel that the book was more than what it looked like, but was not tampered with. He accepted the book and nodded his thanks to the King.

“Why did you detain my companions, take their wands, and leave them with no answers?” Seraph asked.

“For the safety of my clan. I was not sure of your intentions.” He said, their confiscated item suddenly appearing on the floor in front of them. Seraph noticed that his cloak was indeed torn to shreds.

“Vulcan is going to kill me.” He said to himself.

“That old man still going at, is he. I’ve not seen him for many, many years. Yes, I know the great Smith. You see, my clan and the Grim’s Guild go back a long way. Since the creation of our race, which was by your many times great-grandfather, Knoxius, by the way.” Mr. Lovegood told Seraph. Seraph nodded, he had read something about the Guild and a vampire clan in the Archives, but was not sure which clan it was. He wasn’t surprised to find out that it had been Knoxius who had tried to create ‘perfect weapons’.

“They helped us in gaining our freedom, and for that, we owe our thanks to the Guild. Once again our enemies have risen. I had hoped that after their last fall that they would stay forgotten, but it appears that this is too much to hope for.”

“The Shinobi.” Seraph said, and the King nodded, though he was slightly surprised that the boy had recognized them for what they were. Seraph was surprised as well; the conclusion had come to him suddenly. Draco and Neville looked at him in confusion then comprehension.

“Yes, them.” The man said with distaste. “I believe that they had hoped to kidnap my daughter to try and break me, break the clan. But once again, the Grims have come to our aid. I am afraid, however, that now that they know of your existence, they will want you dead as well.”

“I figured that.” Seraph said. “Unfortunately, they are many, and we are few. And that won’t be changing for a while yet. We still must train.” He told him, and the King nodded. “It does not help that I am already caught up in another war.” He added.

“You fight for, or against the Dark one?” The old man asked, his voice even.

“Against. The man is a monster, and I plan on killing him. I don’t wish to be known, though. We will fight him from the darkness, taking out his Death Eaters, hopefully, before they are aware what is upon them.” Seraph smirked. “I want them to fear every dark corner, every empty alley, and every dog that howls.” Seraph told the man, his smirk turning feral.

“You are most definitely a Black, boy.” The old man said, laughing softly.

“Where do you stand, if at all?” Seraph asked him.

“This clan, and many others, have claimed neutrality in wizard wars for some centuries. No, we do not meddle in their affairs, unless we are attacked, of course.”

“Of course.” Seraph said.

“I have heard that some of the rogue clans, those not recognized by head clans, have been approached by his people though. They are young, brash, and as such, weak. They will most likely join him. If that happens, then the Moon Clan, as the governing vampiric body of Europe, will eradicate them.” He said simply. Seraph could only nod at the blunt statement.

“There are those who have been wronged, in one way or another, the ‘Monster’ as you called him, within the Clan. Should you ask for it, they will aid you.”

“Though I am sure that they have to get approval from you first, so what do you want?” Seraph asked them man, who was grinning slightly.

“Of course. You see, with the Shinobi back, and already attacking, they will come after their target again. I think it will only be a matter of time before they realize that she attends one of the Magical Schools in Britain. When they know, they will attack again. Hogwarts’ wards may be strong, but the Shinobi are ingenious. I fear for her safety.” The King said, looking at his daughter. Luna said nothing, but simply glared at her father. “I think it would be too much to ask for you to keep her out of harms way, but I would like you to make sure that she survives. She can handle herself well, but anyone can be overwhelmed.” He added at seeing the look on his daughter’s face that had gone from a glare to vengeful. Seraph never knew her face could show anything else besides dreamy indifference.

“Do not give me your answer at this moment.” The King added. “Luna, would you escort our guests to the formal dining room, please?” He asked her. She nodded her head and stood up, as did Draco and Neville. Seraph and Mr. Lovegood remained seated. Seraph had questions and he could tell that the King wished to speak with him privately. Draco and Neville looked at him questioningly, but he assured them with a subtle wave of his hand. After they had left, the King began to speak again.

“Do you know how you survived, young Alpha Grim?”

“No, I do not. But I but your servant suspected blood magic.” Seraph told him. He nodded.

“Yes, by blood magic. But it was more then that. Luna performed a very dangerous piece of blood magic. She wished to save you, at all costs. I do not know why, but she felt that you had to live. The Magic that she preformed requires the donating of magically charged blood from someone to another in order to quicken the healing process.”

Seraph nodded.

“For vampires.”

Seraph stared.

“Do you know what the process of turning a mortal to a vampire is?” The King asked softly. Seraph shook his head. “One must drain the victim nearly dry and then give them blood that is a mixture of their’s and the vampire’s. I use the term ‘victim’ lightly hear as it is a deeply personal experience and the turned is almost always voluntary. Your blood was forcefully taken, and the blood you were given had none of your own in it.”

“What are you telling me?” Seraph asked, his voice low and growling.

“I am saying that you were partially turned.” The man told him. Seraph just continued to look at him. A small shiver had run through him like an electric shock.

“How much?” Seraph asked evenly.

“From your aura, I would say less then a quarter, but more then a tenth.”

“Shit.” Was all he said for a moment, then, “What does this mean for me?”

“From what my guard told me, you were already unnaturally quick and strong. You may not have noticed it yet, but your movements are faster and I am sure you will notice a slight increase in strength. Your teeth have all sharpened, though I doubt that you will grow full fangs. Your vision in the dark, if it was not already good, should be better. If I could gauge it, I would say that you are as strong as one of the Vampire Elders, me, or a werewolf. In speed, I would say that you are as faster then the young vampires, but not as fast as me. Luna is gifted in Blood Magic, so you may gain the ability to use it, even though you are not a full vampire.”



“And drinking blood?” Seraph asked. He was not disgusted at the thought. He had received enough beatings in his life to know what blood tasted like. It did not really bother him.

“I don’t think you will ever need to hunt. A kill will yield enough blood for a full vampire to live without hunger for more than a month, three before the bloodlust begins, four before their sanity wavers, and five before they either die or lose their minds and become the blood-sucking monsters that muggle horror stories are made of. With age, and power, vampires can go much longer without feeding. I myself can go nearly a century without feeding if I had to. But that would leave me tired and looking like a corpse. I feed regularly to keep my energy up. There are some Clans that do this to switch leaders every century, but the Moon Clan does not. You, I think, could go for maybe six months before you felt the need for blood. And then it would be enough to fill a goblet and you would be fine for another six months. That’s not to say that you could not drink more than that.

If you are injured, then you will need more blood than a normal vampire would need to drink for the accelerated healing. A wizard blood replenishing potion may work, but probably not as well as the real thing. Even if you are able to perform blood magic, it will never be as strong as Luna’s. If you do use blood magic, then you will have to drink much sooner. The more blood you drink, the more energy you will have. If you were to drink an ounce of blood, you might be able to easily go three days without sleep. I haven’t slept a wink for fifteen years.” He said with a smile.

“To continue, there are different types of blood. My estimates are based off of drinking human muggle blood as it is the easiest to acquire. You can live off of any blood, really, but the weaker it is, magically speaking, then the more you will have to drink. Mundane animal blood is the weakest, starting from prey animals, things like deer, to stronger predators, like bears or tigers. Then come the muggles. All muggles have a small amount of magic; they are just unable to use it. It can be found in the blood though, and then we can use it. The healthier the person, the better the blood will be. Blood with too much cholesterol can make you sick and make you feel greasy. Next come the magical humans, Witches and Wizards. The more powerful they are, the better their blood will be. Wizard’s blood

might tide you over for eight months at the least, depending on power level. Last but not least, magical creatures and beings. Wizards think them beneath them in power because they do not use wands. They are more powerful because whatever magic that they wield does not use require an external focus. Never ask a centaur for blood, it tastes horrible and they don't like to give it up for anything. Owl blood would be the weakest, but not bad. Magical snakes are good, Basilisk blood being possibly stronger than Troll or Giant blood. Those two will sate even the youngest of vampires for a good while. You can ask Luna if you have anymore questions dealing with blood."

"What about light, silver, wood, crucifixes and whatnot?" Seraph asked, only to be met with laughter.

"No, most of that is a lot of trash made by the muggles. Silver is a purifying metal, but vampires were created. We are not a disease like the wizards would like to think, so silver is not much of a problem, though we are slightly allergic to it, but far less than werewolves are. Wood will not kill us, but a stake through the heart made of anything will kill anyone. A crucifix is as useful to kill a vampire as 'holy water'. Light is a major annoyance to non-magical vampires, but with age, they can build up an intolerance to it. Magical vampires do not need to avoid light, but many do anyway. Garlic, however, acts very well as a 'vampire repellent'. We are highly allergic to it, mortally so. A tolerance can be built up, like I have and Luna had to, but it is to be avoided."

"And the whole 'turning to dust' thing?"

"Past a certain age, the body stops aging and requires begins to use the blood to not only sustain the body but to keep it looking...fresh, I guess you could say. At about 500 years of age a vampire will turn to dust if killed." He told him.

"Can the turning be completed or reversed?" Seraph asked after a few minutes of digesting the information. In a way, this was good. Increased speed, strength, energy via blood, and possibly able to learn a branch of magic that he could not utilize otherwise. In another way, he was fucked.

"No, the turning cannot be completed; you are what you are now. And I would hope that you would not try to turn away the gift that you were given." Lovegood said a little coldly.

"Of course not, I was merely curious." Seraph assured him.

"There is more though, and call me Odd." Odd told him. "The turning, it creates a bond between the turned and the vampire, generally called the 'Sire Bond'. Luna is not old enough to be a sire, and technically should not have been able to even partially turn you. As it stands, the bond, along with the intentions behind its creation, has left her bonded to you. It is not of a subservient nature, it is simply a bond. You may feel her emotions from time to time, possibly speak to her telepathically, but I think that will be the extent of it." Odd informed him. Seraph started to rub at his temples. All this simply because their had been portkey wards at that damn club. Of course he could go back further and blame it on Draco and his faulty 'intuition'.

"You said that you had fought with the Guild against the Shinobi. And you can call me Seraph, if you wish." Seraph said, and Oddarious nodded.

"Where you ever a member of the Guild?"

"Yes, I was. That is, I still would be if you called for the elder Guild Members. At the disbandment of the first Guild, I was told that I would not have to rejoin if I did not feel inclined to. At the moment, I might feel inclined. Why do you ask?" Odd questioned, knowing the answer.

"Because, if that is true, then Luna would have come to me after the blood call and your request for us to watch her for you would be moot. I will not be doing the calling until my Chiefs and I are trained more, but I would like to ask your daughter to join us now." Seraph told the grinning man.

"Yes, I figured that. I think she would have asked herself if given the chance, she believes the castle to be boring during the summer months. Come, Seraph, let us make our way to the Dining Room. We are having a small feast to give you our thanks." Odd said, standing up. Seraph followed him to a large chamber slightly smaller then

Hogwarts' Great Hall. Though the dining room was large, the table that Draco, Neville, Luna, and a few others were sitting at was not. As they appeared, the vampires stood up and did not sit again until Odd had sat down. Seraph assured Draco and Neville that he would speak to them later and they began eating.

Seraph did not realize how hungry he was until he had eaten a pound or more of steak and other various foods. He couldn't place it, but the steak was much sweeter than he could ever remember tasting before. Thinking of it made his teeth hurt. Teeth hurt... He ran his tongue around in his mouth, noticing for the first time that all of his teeth were indeed sharper, and his canines were growing slightly. He could actually feel them growing out. After a moment, they receded to their regular size, but Seraph was surprised at how large they had grown.

"Seraph, would you care to have a shot of this?" Odd asked, holding a small shot glass filled to the brim with a viscous dark red fluid that almost glowed.

"What is it?" Seraph asked cautiously.

"Special blood, I don't generally imbibe, but I thought tonight would be a good night to have some." Odd said with a shrug. Seraph took the small glass and sniffed it. It was blood, of course, but it was not pungent but smelled like flying with a tangy kick, burning the back of his nose. How you could taste flying, he did not know, but that is how he would describe it. He threw it back and slammed the glass to the table, gaining everyone's attention. He had tasted some of the firewhiskey that Seamus had brought once. That had burned his throat, made him shoot out a ball of fire from his mouth, and turned his ears red for three hours. His throat felt like it had been melted. It followed from his throat to his stomach, burning its way down. After he was sure that his intestines had been burned through, it went to his veins. Every blood vessel was on fire, like liquid lead was racing through his system, all trying to reach one place. He grabbed at his chest in useless attempt to stop the burning in his heart.

By now Odd was doubled over in laughing and was being held at steak knife point from Draco and Neville. Luna was demanding to

know what he had done and the other vampires looked on in various states of amusement or bewilderment.

Seraph let go of his chest a minute later, though he was still hunched over. The pain in his heart had lessened, to be taken over another feeling. It was best described as a rush. Suddenly all of his senses came to life. The pain was gone, washed out as if a fire hose had blasted it away. The stiffness in his muscles and what little fatigue he had was washed away as well. Then he felt it. It was overwhelming and he was sure that he heard a humming coming from somewhere. It was energy, energy like he had never felt before. The humming became louder, and he realized that it was not humming. It was growling. And it was coming from him. It was too much though, much too much. Seraph's arms shot out, his back arched slightly, and he let out a feral roar that shook the room. His eyes opened to reveal a pair of green and silver eyes literally lit up the room. Then he collapsed into his seat. Luna settled to glare at her father, she knew what had happened but wished she would have warned him first.

"What did you do to him!" Neville demanded, and Odd saw that he might actually be in danger of being cut. Neville had positioned the steak knife at the man's throat when he was laughing.

"I didn't do anything to him. He just tried the strongest stuff he's ever likely to find and is coming down from a blood high." Odd explained to the boys. They weren't satisfied though. Whatever they were about to do was cut off as Seraph sat up again.

"Holy fucking shit." He said, louder than he had meant to. His eyes were still glowing, though not as brightly, and sparks of black flame shot from his fingertips absentmindedly, burning small holes into the table and plates. "What the hell was that!" Seraph demanded. He wasn't mad, far from it, actually. It just came out that way. Odd laughed heartily, the boys backed down, and Luna wished she could maim her father.

"Well, you were going to have to have some of it soon, so I thought you might try some of the 'good stuff'." Odd explained to him.

"Seraph likes the Dragon Blood..." Luna sang.

Black-Ascension

End Chapter

Nain Kushin: No Pain. (Numbing Seal)

Arigatou: Thank you

Sensei: Master/Teacher

Banpaia: Vampire

Reigen: Grim

Girudo: Guild

Shadokira or Shado-Kira: Shadow-Killer

Hai: Yes

Isha: Medic

Yes, the chapter is done. This chapter is what happens when you discover your muse is music and a magic eight ball. Not really, but this chapter and the last have deviated so far off their original path it is ridiculous. Well, I don't think I can say that. It can't break from the path if it was not planned out, so I'll just say that I was inspired randomly and found out that this brought up a host of new possibilities.

The Shinobi using Jutsu is loosely based off of the Naruto ANIME (my gravest apologies for calling such a show a cartoon, thanks imgonnadie) of which I will be the first to admit I know next to nothing about (used to come on adult swim, cartoonnetwork, but I don't have cable. So fan sites are the best I can do. If it doesn't fit with how it is supposed to work, tell me. If you tell me something and I don't change it, it probably means that I wanted it the way it was and don't care. Hence the term 'loosely based off of'. Gives me creative license.

I'll pick at it later.

This is now the longest chapter in the story thus far, and though I said it in the last one, I really doubt I pull put out a longer one then this. The last was Chapter 14 at 14,998 words. This one is exactly 15,904. A small step up, I suppose. I really wanted to break this chapter up, but I figured I'd keep it the way it is to make up for the last chapter.

Anyway, hope you enjoyed it. Remember to review, and tip your waiter,

I'm out.

Previously...

“What did you do to him!” Neville demanded, and Odd saw that he might actually be in danger of being cut. Neville had positioned the steak knife at the man’s throat when he was laughing.

“I didn’t do anything to him. He just tried the strongest stuff he’s ever likely to find and is coming down from a blood high.” Odd explained to the boys. They weren’t satisfied though. Whatever they were about to do was cut off as Seraph sat up again.

“Holy fucking shit.” He said, louder than he had meant to. His eyes were still glowing, though not as brightly, and sparks of black flame shot from his fingertips absentmindedly, burning small holes into the table and plates. “What the hell was that!” Seraph demanded. He wasn’t mad, far from it, actually. It just came out that way. Odd laughed heartily, the boys backed down, and Luna wished she could maim her father.

“Well, you were going to have to have some of it soon, so I thought you might try some of the ‘good stuff’.” Odd explained to him.

“Seraph likes the Dragon Blood...” Luna sang.

## Chapter 19: Black Echoes

Seraph looked around the room that he had been given. It was fairly large with a massive bed, comfortable bathroom, with a small study like area complete with desk and books. He looked at the bed and wondered why he had even been given a room with one. It was not likely that he was going to sleep. For a while. He cursed Odd in his mind. A half goblet of muggle blood would sustain him for six months, maybe more. Longer with magical blood. So what did the damn demented vampire master do? Gave him a straight ounce of Dragon Blood. Dragon Blood, one of the most powerful substances available to wizards, not to mention the most magically charged blood known to vampires.

Odd had explained to him what had happened. That sudden rush of energy was his body assimilating the blood for the first time, and



since it was from such powerful blood, it was unlikely that he would lose any energy due to a blood high from less powerful blood. The sudden influx of energy had essentially overloaded his body and he had passed out from it. Once it was able to get used to the blood and energy, he had woken up. While he may have lost a lot of the energy during the blood high, he still had too much to sleep. Probably for days. This would have been unfortunate, if he was not motivated to actually do something. He had looked at the date and time when he came back from dinner.

12:18 a.m. July 3, 1996

It was the third of July and he had yet to activate his father's portrait or even think about redoing the will. While he did have the excuse of being busy, he was disappointed at himself that he had forgotten to one, activate his father's portrait, and two, such an important event. He took off his ring and enlarged it. Opening up one of the regular sized compartments he found that he had opened the wrong one. Lying in dark sand where several small eggs. Two looked to be ready to hatch, another pair whose eggs seemed to be trying to blend into their surroundings and an oddly black egg that had a light whitish, almost silver, glow to it.

'The snakes.' He thought to himself. A pair of Basilisks, Chameleon Snakes, and an experimental Viper/Basilisk breed if he remembered correctly. He had almost forgotten about the little guys, er, guys and girls, whatever. He had planned on waiting until he got to Hogwarts to hatch the Basilisks, but maybe the room that the Book of Time would make would be better. If he could keep them from gazing at anyone unprepared, that is. Once they were old enough, he wanted them to repopulate the Chamber of Secrets, only to answer to him. If Hogwarts was attacked then they would have some of the most powerful magical creatures at their disposal for protection. His disposal, really, but they would be used for the defense of the castle. The Chameleon Snakes he planned on breeding as well and placing them wherever they would be most useful, like Knockturn Alley, the Knockturn Slums, Diagon Alley, Hogwarts, and possibly at known Death eater homes. He would hatch the last one soon. He had an idea of what he wanted to do this year, he would have to speak about

it to his father first, but he hoped that Cheleb and the yet-to-be hatched snake could join him.

He opened the next compartment and found the portrait he was looking for. He noticed the other portrait there but did not look at it. He pulled out his wand and tapped the far right corner saying 'Activate'. The portrait had a light run across it as though a reflection of the sun had passed over it. The small rectangle slowly started to grow. Finally it reached its proper size and Sirius scratched his nose and stretched, eliciting a few small pops from his back.

"Merlin, that feels better. Whoa, pup! You changed quiet a bit there, haven't you?" Sirius asked, surprise and amazement in his voice. "How did you manage that?" He asked. Seraph grinned at his father.

"Animagus, my dear Padfoot." Seraph replied, leaving his father gobsmacked.

"How long have I been deactivated then?" Sirius asked in confusion. "It took James, the rat, and I almost three years to complete!"

"Well, you probably used instructions put out by the Ministry. You have been deactivated for a few weeks now." Seraph told him.

"We found the book in Hogwarts...so I suppose that it would have had to have been approved by the Ministry at some point. I hated the pre-transformation exercises. So you actually achieved a full transformation in what, little more than a month?" He asked his son. He wasn't expecting him to laugh at him.

"A month, no. Just long enough to finish the potion." He informed the portrait.

"Potion?"

"Yeah, the potion. Took maybe a day in a half. And I don't know what exercises you are talking about, unless you mean finding your animal."

“No...the book told us that we had to practice transforming our hair and appendages before we could pull a complete transformation.” Sirius said, a little put out.

“Interesting. I have a book written by Gryffindor on it. You have to be slightly versed in meditation to find your animal, and able to follow some directions, as well as access to some pretty rare ingredients to make the potion, but that was about it. Once you found your animal, you take the potion. The potion forces the first transformation. How much pain you go through during the first transformation was dependant on how well you found your animal, maybe how much you knew about it too. I had a full transformation, hence my ‘god-like’ physique.” Seraph said, pulling a pose fit for Hercules. That made him wonder who Hercules had actually been. Maybe he could meet him at some point, if he was still alive? The comment and pose sent Sirius into hysterics. When he finally calmed down, he wiped a stubborn tear from his eye.

“You truly are my son. I said the same thing to James after my first transformation, of course, mine wasn’t as impressive... I wish I would have known that we could have gone through it in less then a week, but I suppose it was all part of the adventure. So what’s been going on since I last talked to you?” Sirius asked.

“Too much.” Seraph told him sadly. “I know you know about Dumbledore and his manipulations, but they extend further then either of us thought.”

“What do you mean?” Sirius asked and Seraph clenched his fist.

“My friends have been keeping tabs on me almost since I started at Hogwarts. They were my friends, people I trusted, and they betrayed me at every turn. Then Ginny, damn overly obsessive fan girl, turns on me as well. I don’t know how long she was ever actually spying on me though. They each got something as payment for betraying me. Tonks is sure that Hermione was promised the Head Girl position at Hogwarts, Ron got his prefectship as well as a spot on the quidditch team, and Ginny...Ginny was promised me.” Seraph said, anger burning in his eyes.

"I can't believe that they would turn on you like that...Hermione may have put too much stock in authority, but I thought you guys had said she was mellowing out. And Ron, I knew he was jealous of you, but I did not think that he would stoop so low. I never really talked to Ginny much, but she did ask an awful lot of questions about you. I thought it was cute at the time, but now..." Sirius trailed off, shaking his head. "How was she promised you?"

"Will bonding potion which was going to be personally administered by Dumbles himself..." Seraph trailed off as he saw more anger in his father's eyes than he had ever seen before.

"That bastard! Oh, just wait until he dies...I'm going to kill him!" Sirius calmed down after a couple of minutes. "That's...that's just disgusting." Sirius told Seraph. Seraph nodded.

"Yeah, it is. He controls Ginny, Ginny controls me, and no one gets any ideas of free will. They did the same thing to Hermione, but I don't know how long she's been under it. I could see it in her aura, she was bound to Weasley. The potion felt like Ginny and chains I think, that was how I knew what it was. That was the night that I left Headquarters. Blew the front door right off and caught a ride on Cheleb." Seraph said with a pained smile at the memory.

"When did they take you to headquarters and who is Cheleb, might I ask?"

"That's right...you don't know. Sorry. After I got through with Diagon and Knochurn alley, met some very interesting people down there too, I made my way back to Privet Drive. My uncle was pissed out of his mind, telling me I was going to learn my lesson, and how proud of Dudley he was. I didn't know what he was talking about until I went to the kitchen. Dudley caught me off guard and punched me in the stomach and threw a lighter or a match, I can't remember into a big basting pot. It went up in flames...Hedwig was inside. They killed her. I never did anything to them besides living, if you could call growing up with them 'living'. And they killed her." Seraph told him, his eyes slightly wet. But he would not let any tears fall. He smirked darkly, which unsettled Sirius slightly.

"We got our revenge though, Hedwig and I." Seraph concentrated for a moment and a long black blade appeared in his hands. "I found some interesting things in the vaults. This is just one of them. Black fire is in the blade, and I cut the fat pig down, blew him to pieces. I went to find Hedwig, but she was burnt to ashes...Had she been allowed to die naturally, she would have been reborn a phoenix. I always knew she was special, but I could not have imagined that...But she was killed, murdered. She came back as more of a 'fire spirit' I guess I should say. A dark phoenix of black flames...she was beautiful. When she sang, it was the most amazing thing that I have ever heard, but the rest of the Dursley's would hardly agree. It killed them, tortured them before they died, I'm sure. I heard that blood came from out of their ears. I passed out after that." He finished

"I'm really sorry, pup" Sirius said sincerely. Seraph waved the comment off.

"I'm okay, really. Cheleb is a friend that I picked up from the vaults. He's a grim, a puppy, but he's growing quickly. I'm going to have to figure out a way to make him look smaller though... Anyway, I had my choice while I was out. I was in a magically induced coma, apparently. I thought that they did it early just to get it out of the way, but now I think that they did it so that I would be able to get my Chiefs and train earlier. I chose grey, if you were wondering." Seraph told his father at his unasked question. Sirius just smiled. "I got some gifts as well, things like martial and the full transformation, the ability to use parsel magic from Slytherin and some gifts from some of the old families that died out. Ritual, potion, languages, things of that nature. Hedwig gave me my fire affinity," Seraph said, forcing a small ball of black flames into his hand, amazing his father. He concentrated a little harder and was able to reduce the size of the ball until nothing was there.

"That's amazing." Sirius said.

"Thanks. It was after I passed out that the Order came. Well, Remus and Tonks, actually. The wards around the house had fallen and they called the rest of the Order and told them that the house had been attacked, the Dursley's were dead, and that I passed out during the fight alongside Tonks. Dumbledore bought it and took me to

Headquarters. I woke up a little more than a week later, I think. Remus and Tonks talked to me, Pomfrey too. They told me what Dumbledore and my friends were doing and said that they sided with me. The twins and Moody are with me as well. Dumbledore went after Neville after I 'died'. Once Dumbles tried to force the potion on me I hit Gringotts and Vulcans. He's an armor and weapons dealer. He gave me a very life-like dummy and I transfigured it to look like me. Harry Potter after getting hit by a rather violent bus across the street from the Leaky Cauldron. The world mourns and Dumbles is off my back." Seraph said.

"How sad. You do know that you just pulled a prank bigger than the Marauder's ever could. Good on ya boy!" Sirius said with a smile.

"Dumbledore was bent on trying to turn Neville into his next pawn, but Remus, the twins, and Tonks got him out of the house and he joined me in Black Alley. Truly awesome place, by the way. Neville is the Head of his house now, so the old man does not have any say in what he does. That's not stopping him from trying to find him and bring him back to H.Q., I'm sure. For his protection or something similar. Since then Draco Malfoy and Luna Lovegood have joined me and are going to become my Alpha Advisors and Chiefs. Or Luna will when I ask her anyway."

"Malfoy, stuck up little ferret, Lucius' son? How the hell did that happen?"

"After the fight in the Department of Mysteries, Malfoy Sr. lost his standing in the public's eye. That would be an understatement, actually, but whatever. Point is, Draco was made the Head of his house by his father to do his business for him. As soon as Draco became Lord Malfoy, he was told to go to Gringotts to get money for Voldemort. Draco took everything he could from the house and split. Went to find his mother in the Knockturn Slums. She had left earlier after I disowned her. According to Draco, if she did not have any money to offer to Voldemort, then she served no purpose. I found them and offered them safety. I haven't spoken to Narcissa since and Draco has been training with me and Neville for the past couple of weeks." Seraph explained.

“And Lovegood? I heard that he had a daughter, nice guy. Helped me out when, in his own way, when escaped from Azkaban. Said that he knew that I was innocent and gave me a room to stay in for a couple of nights before I went to Dumbledore. He wrote an article in that magazine of his about me being some rock star or something. I got a kick out of that.” Sirius said.

“Really now...I’m staying at his ‘house’, I guess you could call it now. You do know that he is a vampire, correct?” Seraph asked to Sirius’ shocked look.

“N-no. I, uh, can’t say that I did... Kind of wondered why he never slept though. He never tried to take a bite out of me, so I guess I can’t hold anything against him. His daughter is a vampire too then? How did you end up wherever ‘here’ is anyway?”

“Well, long story short, Neville, Draco, and I went into London for a break, tried to find a club to go to. Didn’t quiet work out. Some girl took us to a muggle club, where we almost ended up dinner for her and a bunch of other vampires. Before we could become the main course though, they were attacked.”

“What would attack a vampire?”

“Shinobi. Yeah, they are coming back again and they’re a hell of a lot harder to fight then your average Death Eater. They never used magic, but they are as fast and strong as the vampires that were guarding Luna. We got caught up in the fight, got pretty messed up, actually, and saved them. Luna got the other vampires to take us to their castle so we could be healed. That didn’t go over too well. Draco and Neville were healed fairly easily but I was on the verge of death and Luna did some blood magic to heal me...” Seraph trailed off and looked at Sirius hesitantly.

“You were turned, weren’t you?” Sirius asked

“Only partially, but yeah.” Seraph said, not meeting Sirius’ eyes. If he would have, he would have seen the mischievous glint held within them.

“Well, at least you got a girl out of it.” He laughed at his son’s almost shocked expression.

“Your not, I don’t know...”

“What, mad, disappointed? Hell no! One of my very best friends is a werewolf. He got hairy once a month; you’ll start eating medium rare steaks and develop a taste for blood pops. Or at least that’s what my great aunt Delilah liked. Your alive, that’s what matters.”

“That means a lot to me, dad. And what did you mean by me ‘getting a girl out of it’?” He demanded.

“Well, partial or not, you were turned. Generally that creates a bond. While not technically a marriage bond or anything, the bonded are...‘mates’ you could say.” Sirius explained.

“But Odd said that it was only a partial bond and that Luna bonded herself to me.”

“Then it looks like it’s a one way bond then. The ‘partial’ part he was probably talking about was the fact that it was Luna to you and not both ways. That bond is most likely as strong as any other bond. Vampires don’t talk about theirs bonds though, or if they do, they down play them. It’s like the turning, it’s very personal and if you were not there to witness it, they won’t talk about it to you. Odd did not see it, so he probably felt uncomfortable talking about it with you.” Sirius said with a shrug.

“I so do not need this right now.” Seraph said, not at all ashamed of the whiny tone his voice had taken, much to his father’s amusement.

“Well, you’ve got it. From what it sounds like, she won’t be with anyone else, other then you, but you don’t have the same rules. I wouldn’t suggest taking advantage of that though. From experience, I can tell you that ‘Hell hath no fury like a witch scorned’. And I don’t think you want to find out about a scorned vampire.” Sirius told him, and Seraph nodded with a shudder.



“So what’s all this going to mean for the Potter family assets and such though?” Sirius asked after a moment.

“I was going to get to that before I was side tracked. All of the assets in the Potter estate have been added to the Black’s, along with a few other families I was made a magical heir to. I took a vault from one of the families and asked the goblins to take the money from that and put it in a relief fund for the war. It’s going to be stated in my ‘will’.” Seraph said with a glint in his eye.

“We’re going to need to talk about my will then. There is no way in hell that I’m going to let those traitorous bastards get their hands on anything of mine, yours...whatever.” Sirius said vehemently.

“My thoughts exactly. I spoke to the goblins about changing a will after death. It can be done, but they have to get the new copy, or in your case, your portrait. They will duplicate your echo and update a second portrait. There is some charge, I’m sure, but you will have two portraits that you can move within and have your will changed. You can stipulate in your will that you want one of your portraits to go to Hogwarts somewhere. Think of the hundreds of children you could eventually corrupt.” Seraph said, and Sirius’ eyes were shining now.

“So, what do we do about my will? Originally I wanted Grimmuald Place to go to the Order, a few million galleons each to Ron, Hermione, and Ginny, as well as five million galleons to Arthur and Molly Weasley. About ten million galleons to the Order, another five million and a nice house that I have on a private Island for Remus, three million and a large flat I have in London for Tonks, a few million for her parents as well. Good people, they are. That was the main part of it, besides giving you the rest, which you have now. I had not thought about it, but now that you are dead, the Black line should have been dissolved.” Sirius said with a frown.

“It should have been, but it passed on to your only heir, Seraph Black.” Seraph stated.

“Yeah, I know that pup, but...Oh.”

"In a private will reading held early in the morning of July 13th, your only living descendent was named your heir. No one but the Potter's knew about him, and of course, my mother...who will not be named. No one knew about her because you were a target and did not want the Death Eaters to go after her. After you were imprisoned, she fled the country to, I don't know..."

"France, Japan, Brazil?" Sirius supplied.

"Brazil?" Seraph asked.

"Always wanted to go there." Sirius shrugged.

"Right, well she fled to wherever. I kept your name; she never could believe that you were guilty. You got in contact with me after you escaped. My 'mother' died in an accident a few months ago and I traveled to England stay with you, if I could. I was contacted by Gringotts shortly after and have been staying in a muggle hotel until the will reading." Seraph finished.

"How long did it take to think that up?"

"About ten minutes."

"Works for me. About where you went, I don't know much about Brazil, or how they do things. I know that they don't teach a lot of 'General Magic', like Hogwarts does. I think they go more for what you can do with magic and nature. The old man is too close to the Headmistress of that French school for you to have gone there and all home schooled students are registered with their Ministry. So that leaves Japan. Their Ministry is very formal and will only step in if it is absolutely required. There isn't too much need for them because people generally follow the law, or face some serious punishments. Most children there are home schooled, so that won't be much of a problem."

"And tutors teach general magic?" Seraph asked.

"More or less. You would defiantly get your Hogwarts equivalent from any tutor. They also teach the basics of a very difficult magic called

jutsu. Well, technically, 'Jutsu' isn't magic, it means 'technique', but it requires this technique to perform the magic. Some of them don't even use visible magic, more like the magic charges you body and lets you do things you should not be able to. It has all sorts of purposes, though, but outside of Japan, it's not widely known." Sirius said.

"So I'm going to have to learn at least the basics of this magic?" Seraph asked.

"Yep, more studying!" Sirius said happily.

"And where am I going to find someone to learn this from?"

"I'm sure the Guild held information on it." Sirius assured him.

"Fine. Just how do you know all of this anyway?"

"Pureblood world history, economics, and I wanted to keep my options opened before I went to Hogwarts if I could get away from my family early." Sirius explained.

"So, what are you going to change it to?" Seraph asked after a moment.

"I think I'll still give Grimmuald Place to the Order, I couldn't stand the damn place anyway. I'm afraid that the old man will try to take any money for himself I give to the Order, so nothing for him or them. He can use his own. Nothing for Ron, Ginny, or Hermione. Arthur is a good man, but I don't trust his wife, and I think we both know who wears the pants in that relationship. I'll give him some muggle appliances. I'm sure that Gringotts can arrange that. I'll give more money to both Tonks and Remus, some for the twins, and you'll have to arrange something for Moody because I doubt that he will want someone to acknowledge him...maybe you could get him something from your friend Vulcan? I'll leave some to the Hogwarts hospital wing to thank Pomfrey for helping you. Narcissa will be expected to show, if nothing more then to contest it. She's a Black now, so I guess I can leave her something, that little snot of her son too, I guess. Your friends, Neville and Luna can take what I was going to leave for Ron

and Hermione...Yeah, I think that's it." Sirius said, going over it in his head and nodding to himself.

"Sounds good. I'll have to get you to Gringotts in the next three days so another portrait can be updated." Seraph said

"Sounds good. Its getting late pup, you going to sleep?"

"Nope, had some Dragon Blood. I don't know what sleep is."

"Right...Well, I'm going to crash. 'Night." He said, making his way to the back of his portrait where a door was. The door opened to reveal a large room decked out in Gryffindor red and gold.

"Yeah, night." Seraph said. He took out the book that Odd had given him and began to read.

xxBlack-  
Ascensionxx  
xxx

Since Sirius had gone to sleep, Seraph had been looking over the 'Element' book. It didn't say much, actually. Once you figured out how to summon your element, which according to the book was half the battle, you had to concentrate and will your element to do or form whatever you wanted it to be. Concentrate and will it to be. It gave some ideas as to what you could make your element do or become too. 'Basic' things like shields, chairs, summoning, concentrated balls that could be thrown, everyday items, and some exercises in control. Several hours later Seraph had managed to make a ball of fire flatten into a disc.

There was a knock on the door. But Seraph did not notice it, trying to keep his disc of fire floating above his palm.

"Seraph?" A soft voice asked from the door.

"Shit! Duck!" Seraph yelled as his disc suddenly shot out from above his palm towards his door.

“Good morning, Seraph.” Luna said as she got up from the floor as if flaming disc of destruction being shot at her was an everyday occurrence.

“Sorry about that Luna.” Seraph said, wincing slightly as the rest of the door that hadn’t turned to dust fell to the floor. Luna just smiled dreamily.

“I shot daddy through a wall once with a blast of water.” She told him airily.

“When you were first using your element?” Seraph asked.

“Hmm? No. Breakfast is ready if you want it.” She said, looking over his head. Her dreamy smile dropped slightly. “You know then?” She asked. Seraph did not need her to specify.

“Yeah...Thank you, by the way. I owe you my life.”

“No, you saved me as well. Come on, breakfast is ready.” She said as she turned and walked out of the door. Seraph just stared at the lack of door for a moment before he shook his head, grabbed some clothes, and made his way down to the dining room.

(Black Ascension)

“Morning, Seraph.” Neville said. Draco nodded to him as he took his seat. The news that he was now slightly vampire was met with mixed reactions. Neville had been shocked, but had accepted it with little hesitation. Seraph was still his friend. Draco had actually spit out his drink from his nose, not the most dignified of reactions. He was uncomfortable with the new development, probably due to his upbringing, but thought that it could be advantageous. Seraph had been forbidden from even joking about biting him, something Seraph did not have a problem with.

“Morning, Neville, Draco, Luna, Odd.” He said to the small table. Breakfast was a quite affair until Odd spoke up.

“Now that you boys are all healed up, what do you plan on doing?” Seraph looked towards Neville and Draco. Neville shrugged and Draco concentrated on his food.

“I need to go to Gringotts to have my father’s portrait duplicated and his will. The reading is going to be held on the 13th and he needs to get there at least a week before the will reading.” Seraph said.

“Ah, Sirius Black, I assume.” Seraph nodded. “Good chap he was.”

“He said the same about you, actually. He got a kick out of an article you wrote about him. Luna, you know that your father was once part of the Grim’s Guild, correct?” Seraph asked.

“Oh yes, he talks sometimes about the first Black and his tendency to create the oddest things.” Luna said. “I hope you will let me join you.” She said, a slightly hopeful look in her light blue eyes.

“This Black isn’t too far off the mark then.” Neville spoke up. “Got a house elf to become an Animagus.” He finished, and Odd just shook his head, muttering something about Black’s doing things that ought not be done. Luna was not to be distracted though.

“Well that’s what I wanted to talk to you about. Since your father was in the Guild, you will be as well. Albeit a much younger generation.” Seraph said, and Odd gained an affronted look which Luna laughed at. “The Guild is in your blood, and you would have felt the call. What I am asking you is if you would like to join me, Draco, Neville in the training we are doing before I do the Blood Call?”

“Sounds like fun, I always loved to play hide and seek.” She said as she speared a particularly bloody sausage. Draco gave her a disgruntled look while Neville shook his head, still a little bit uncomfortable with the odd girl’s way of speaking. Seraph studied her closer and thought he saw a hint of a smile on her face but was not sure. ‘Does she say things like that on purpose to confuse people or something?’ Seraph wondered.

“Good, good. Odd, do you by chance have a ritual chamber?” Seraph asked suddenly. Odd gave him a curious look.

“Yes, I do...Why would you need one though?”

“The Guild has the most extensive knowledge on rituals that is known, I believe. There are some rituals that we want to do. I have an affinity towards rituals, so it is not likely that I would die from a small mistake. My companions, however, do not have that luxury. Most of them are relatively simple, but there is one that while not an advanced ritual, is dangerous. More so than any other of the basic variety. We could benefit from someone with any experience or knowledge of rituals. At the least knowledge of how to heal someone after a bad ritual, if they are not dead, that is.” Seraph told him.

“And what is this more dangerous ritual?”

“It is designed to increase one's magical core and make the veins more malleable.”

“The Core-Breaker? That is indeed one of the more dangerous, and certainly powerful, rituals. It was designed after I had reached my maturation so it had little effect on me when I did it. It did allow me to increase the amount of power I could put into my spells. Increasing your magical veins is painful, but ultimately rewarding. I assume that you will want to do the Maturation Ritual afterwards?”

“Not at the moment, but eventually. There are a few more that we wanted to do before that. The Clear-Mind, System Neutralizer, Stone-Skin, and the Revealer-Eye are my top priorities, but I doubt that I can finish those and the Core-Breaker before the will reading on the 13th.” Seraph said.

“I want to do that Sleep-Reduction ritual and the Stone-Skin one myself.” Neville said added.

“The Sleep-Reduction ritual will definitely help for studying, and the Revealer-Eye has potential.” Draco commented.

"I'd like to do the Core-Breaker ritual too, daddy. Seraph, can I look at your ritual book?" Luna asked. Seraph pulled it out of his trunk and handed it to her.

"I've not seen that trunk for more years than I care to admit." Odd said, watching as the black and silver trunk shrink into a ring. "Yes, I will help you and your friends with your rituals. Luna, I would rather you not do these rituals, but they will certainly help. Be careful." Odd told his daughter, receiving a bright, yet dreamy, smile.

"The Core-Breaker takes at least a day or two to recover from. Luna, Seraph, if you drink some blood, it should help you recover faster. I'll have the regular waiting for you, Seraph." Odd said, laughing. "I don't know about the other rituals, as I've never had to do them myself, but most basic rituals will take a full day to recover your magic, but physically you'll just be very fatigued. The Core-Breaker takes so long to recover because it uses your magic as well as your energy." Odd explained.

"Alright, I need to go to Gringotts, but I want to set up when I get back. I have everything that we will need." Seraph told the assembled group. "Odd, can portkeys work in the Shadow Realm?" Seraph asked. Odd looked thoughtful for a moment.

"I suppose they would. Might even bypass wards...I've never tried it personally. I stick to apparition in the Shadow Realm or swiftng." Odd said.

"Swiftng?" Neville asked, confused. He had never heard of it before, and from the equally confused looks from Seraph and Draco, they hadn't either.

"Swiftng is like the vampire equivalent to apparition. Apparition is essentially 'jumping' from one place to another. You throw your magic from the place that you are at to the place that you want to be. It's rather violent and causes a disruption in the air around you and any magic fields you happen to be near, that's why you get such a loud pop when it's done. The slower you 'jump', the quieter the noise will be. Swiftng is similar, except that you are not throwing yourself from point a) to point b) but traveling, like flying. The closest thing that I



can associate it with would be like traveling at the fastest possible speed through the Shadow Realm.” Odd finished. Seraph had a look of understanding while Draco and Neville still looked confused.

“Imagine being banished through water by Merlin.” Seraph said. Draco nodded, though Neville thought that sounded painful. Seraph tapped the trunk/ring on his finger, muttering ‘Portus’ under his breath, concentrating on where he was and where he wanted to be, and enough power for a return trip. The ring glowed a dark purple before setting to its original color. Odd was curious as to why the portus spell would make anything glow a color other than light blue, but shrugged it off.

“Hold on, what will reading?” Draco asked, interested. He had been too caught up in the discussion about the rituals to question it, but now he remembered.

“The will reading of my father, Sirius Black. Harry Potter’s will is going to be read at the same time. Or it will be once I set it up.” Seraph said.

“How can you make Potter’s will be read at the same time?” Draco asked. Something wasn’t adding up and he didn’t like it. Seraph cursed himself mentally, having forgot that he had not told Malfoy about him being, or had been, Harry Potter. He concentrated for a moment and looked at Draco with a face from ‘beyond the grave’.

“Harry Potter never existed, so I killed him.” Seraph said, bright emerald green eyes locked on surprised and confused grey ones. “Well, I’ll be back shortly.” Seraph said, standing up and walking towards the corner wall. Even before he reached it, his body took on a blurry look before he totally disappeared, leaving two thoroughly shocked men, a third wondering how he had changed his features, and a laughing witch.

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Seraph finished with his business at Gringotts within an hour. For a price, the Goblins were more than happy to acquire various muggle

appliances. Official notices would be sent out within the day. He made his way to Vulcan's to see what could be done for Moody.

"Hey, old man!" Seraph yelled as he walked into the darkened shop. Well, he assumed it was darkened, but between his Animagus transformation and now slightly vampiric abilities, the room looked fairly bright.

"Oi." A disgruntled voice from the back called. A couple of crashes later, Vulcan walked out of the back with an arm full of leather. "What can I do...Why, hello young Master. Your friends have come by, looking for you. They left young Dumbledore's 'Order of the Flaming Peacocks' as one of the red headed fellows said, permanently. I was under the impression that you would be on ventures requiring most of your time, and sent them to the Keep with your two house elves. They've been there a couple of days now." Vulcan said.

"I planned to be, but circumstances beyond my control have delayed those ventures to after the 13th. I assume that Moody stayed with the Order?"

"That's what they said."

"Good, I still needed someone in the Order. Speaking of Moody, what do you have in the way of upgrades? Wooden pegs cannot be the latest in advancements." Seraph said. Vulcan grinned.

"I've been trying to fit him with something new for the past fifteen years. He preferred to make something himself, so he got a fairly functional wooden leg. Wood is easier to enchant, but they need to be recharged fairly often, like every year. I was able to obtain a rather substantial amount of mythrill recently. It's an extremely strong magical metal, easily enchanted, and they hold longer than any other substance besides ward crystals."

"I would like to contract you to make a replacement leg made out of the mythrill. I want it enchanted to size to fit, silenced, not be removed by anyone but the owner, and space inside of it to hold a couple knives and a spare wand, maybe a potion or two."

"I can do that, take maybe a week. It will be based off a real leg, bones and joints and such, so it will be as good, well, probably better, than his real leg. When are you going to need it by?" Vulcan asked, making some notes on a floating pad in front of him.

"A week sounds good. If I can force him to use this then maybe I can get him to update his eye as well. It's kind of his thing, but it might make people lower their guard around him." Seraph said thoughtfully. "I'm coming from Japan to England, settling here permanently. The clothing that I have will do, but I want a cloak or something that has more of a Japanese style to it. Several if possible, and as protective as my last cloak. More physically resistant if you can." Seraph said, pulling out his tattered cloak.

"That was a work of art!" Vulcan wailed sadly. "What did you do, run into a group of Shinobi or something?"

"Yeah, actually. That's why I'd appreciate it if the next was more resistant to sword attacks." Seraph said, not noticing Vulcan's dumbfounded expression as he inspected a large pickaxe type weapon.

"The Shinobi have risen again? Well shit. I knew they would not stay down for much longer. I've got something back here that might interest you though." He said as he went to the back. "The Japanese are very traditional in their armor. Up until a thousand years ago, maybe more, they wore full suits of metal and dragon hide. Think of what the muggle samurai wore to war and you'll be close." Vulcan's voice got stronger as he walked towards the front. "With more advancements in enchantments and being able to use stronger dragon hide, they got thinner, until they started to resemble what you might think of a cloak. What was once used for war has become everyday protection. With frequent use of clothing, comes the inevitable. Style. This is a sample that came in a few years ago." Vulcan said, holding up a thick light grey cloak with a high neck and no sleeves. "This is what I made." Vulcan told him, handing him a bundle of leather.

Seraph laid it against one of the numerous tables. It was similar to the grey one, but it was thinner, made out of the same dragon hide mesh that his now destroyed cloak was. It was a deep black with silver lining on the inside and on the high collar. Several pockets lined the inside and an odd silver rope hung at the hip on the left side.

“What’s with the loop?” Seraph asked.

“The heads of families traditionally carry a weapon. In Europe this mostly died out or was replaced by canes, but the tradition holds in Japan and other places except America. A sword would fit in that loop and it is charmed to hold the scabbard until it is removed by the owner. Depending on the standing of the Head, he might carry more than one weapon. The second loop under it can hold another sword or a dagger. These blades can be used but have become more of a show of standing and power. You would probably carry two blades and a dagger, at least. But that isn’t practical, which is what you’re going for.” Vulcan said.

Seraph nodded and took off his shirt, wearing one of his undamaged vests that Vulcan had made for him. He put the cloak on and looked at a mirror. The collar came up to his ears, protecting his neck from attack. The lack of sleeves was probably for more mobility, he thought. The cloak was not very loose around his chest and back, but flowed freely at his legs. It was as long as his cloak, stopping just above the ground. All in all, he thought it looked pretty good. His longer hair was getting caught up in the collar though, and he shortened it, making several full spikes in his hair that were tipped in silver.

“Heating, cooling, cleaning, silencing and sizing charms. While the arms are unprotected, the physical protection for the chest, sides, and back more than make up for it. During a fast turn, the bottom half will flare out, possibly deflecting blow or distracting an attacker. It has some demiguise hair laced in, but not much. I designed it to have more of a sheen, its slightly more formal that way, I suppose. You’ll need these as well, they go with it.” Vulcan told him, handing him a pair of black and silver leather gauntlets.

“Those can carry a concealed dagger and a wand in each. They’ll work just as good as the wand holster I gave you before.” Vulcan said and Seraph tried them on, noting the fit and the hard pieces of metal at the sides.

“To deflect physical attacks if you’re good enough with them. They can deflect some spells, but I wouldn’t rely on that too much.” Vulcan commented.

“I’ll take it and several more when you have the time. Can a crest be put on it?”

“What kind of crest?”

“For this one, family crest. But I think I’ll try to use these instead of the Hogwarts robes.”

“For familial crests, just have your ring put it on. Hold it to where you want the crest and simply tell it to add the crest. Pretty simple, but only the Head’s ring can do it. And I’m pretty sure the house elves at Hogwarts put the house crests on.” Vulcan told him.

“How much for the cloaks and the leg, and how much of that mythrill can you bare to part with?” Seraph asked.

“Leg will be a thousand galleons. Cloaks are on the house, and I can part with about a two hundred pounds. I meant it when I got a substantial amount of the stuff. Nearly a ton. It’ll keep me busy for a few years yet.” Vulcan told him.

“How much for the metal as well?”

“That would be about three thousand galleons.” Vulcan said, as he ran to the back and returned to the front a minute later, carrying a large red case. Seraph nodded and pulled out 4,500 galleons and laid it on the table.

“Thanks, Vulcan. See you in a week.” Seraph said, grabbing the case and disappearing into a shadow. Vulcan just shook his head and began to make designs for a leg.

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Seraph felt the same odd feeling that he felt from the last time he used a portkey, like he was made stationary while the rest of the world moved around him. It was an odd, if less nauseating, way to travel. He just didn't know why they did that. Perhaps that was how all portkeys affected their owner? He appeared in the Shadow Realm of the dining room in Moon Castle. He had spoken briefly to Remus, Tonks, and the twins, telling them about where he was staying for the next few days and to expect a letter from Gringotts at some point. Remus had immediately noticed his smell, or his lack of smell. He said that he now smelled like he had been in the room recently or that he was far away and his scent was in the wind. Seraph explained what had happened and besides the worry filled reprimand from the werewolf, it had gone over pretty well. Tonks complimented him on his 'duds' as she called it and the twins promised to get started on a full line of blood flavored sweets.

He walked out of a shadow and took a seat at the table, startling the only occupant there and making her drop her book, Luna. She retrieved the book and Seraph had a sudden thought. 'Can vampires blush?' Then after a moment he had a second one. 'Why do I care?' He thought to himself and noticed that the book that she was reading was actually his, the one on mostly basic rituals.

“Find anything that interests you?” He asked her. She nodded absentmindedly.

“The Re-Breather might be useful, if you need to be underwater for a time. Some of the eye enhancements too. There is a ritual here, called the Re-Heal. It’s advanced, but it heals any cuts in a matter of minutes and it regenerates blood. It actually says that it infuses magic into the blood so that it can be replicated faster.” She explained.

“Yeah, that is one that we all eventually want to do.” Seraph commented.

"Vampires already heal faster than what this is talking about, if this ritual would make you heal as fast as any vampire, I'm sure. But I'm more interested in the blood regeneration. It might be possible that it would provide the blood that the vampire needs to survive...It would be the closest thing to a cure that has been found." Luna said.

"It has the potential to be, but it would probably kill more than half of the people that try it. Rituals are precise, unhurried, and a little bit different for everyone. If this became common knowledge, someone would probably try to sell the 'correct' version of it and get a lot of vampires killed. Maybe your father should take a look at it. It's possible that it could be altered to just regenerate blood." Seraph told her.

"I suppose, but it might be nice..." Here she trailed off.

"What, to be normal?" Seraph asked. She nodded, her eyes not leaving the book, but she had stopped reading.

"What is normal anyway? There is no set guideline but what society expects, and they don't usually meet it. I survived the killing curse, survived Voldemort or his goons more times than I care to admit. I lived a lie for fifteen years, in a skin not my own. I'm the magical heir to more families than I can list on one hand and blood heir to one of the oldest families in history. I'm not yet sixteen years old and I am the leader of an ancient Guild who prided itself on killing and stealing, and being skilled enough to get away with it. I had to kill myself just to get away from a manipulative old man and traitorous friends." Seraph told her, listing things off on his fingers as he went.

"Not exactly normal." Luna admitted.

"Maybe not, but besides the backstabbing friends and the old man, this has been the best summer that I can remember ever having."

"Even after being turned?"

"Hell yes. Dragon Blood beats out firewhiskey any day. And no hangover." Seraph told her, watching her fight a laugh. It ended up coming out a snort, making Seraph laugh. "And now I'm going to

stretch my core, so let's find your father." Seraph said, standing up. She followed a moment later, still reading the book.

(Black Ascension)

"I wondered if you were going to show up soon." Odd said. "Ritual chamber is down the hall on the left. I can watch over your friends if you are sure that you can do this yourself. There is a second chamber across from the first. It is slightly smaller, but it is warded the same." Odd told him, and Seraph nodded. "Luna can assist you. I want to watch over hers after she has studied it."

Seraph opened up his trunk and pulled out everything that they would need, ingredients, some pre-made potions, pure white rabbits (still held in stasis), and the ritual blades.

"They should look over the ritual once again. They should know it, but once more can't hurt." Seraph told him as he went down the hall and to the right.

The chamber was still larger than the one in his trunk, despite Odd saying that it was a small one. Several rings lined the floor, the smallest one, about ten feet in diameter, held a large pentacle. Luna helped with the set up. Open braziers filled with a strange mixture of herbs and incense had stood in each corner, the resulting shadows giving an even stranger atmosphere to the ritual chamber. A white rabbit was placed at every point of the pentacle. A bowl and a ritual blade sat next to the rabbit at the top most point. The potions that he had brewed earlier in the month and had sat long enough to be their most effective and were placed next to the rabbits. The room was ready. Seraph disrobed completely, as was required for the ritual and found that vampires could blush. Luna quickly exited the room and Seraph walked into the center of the pentacle.

He started a slow chant designed to start the ritual. As the lighting of the chamber went down, the magic in it increased. Seraph knelt inside of the pentacle, still chanting. It was slower than before, but now harsher, more guttural. The magic in the room had lifted the stasis on the rabbits, but now they were stuck in place, unable to move. Seraph lifted the thin silver blade and slit the animal's neck.



Blood immediately gushed forth and was caught by the bowl that was next to it. Seraph's chanting became lighter and faster. He dipped two fingers into the bowl and used them to trace runes across his chest, arms, and stomach. As the runes were written on his front, they were being burned into the back of him by the magic in the room, feeling as if a red hot poker was doing it. Once the runes were completed, he drew veins across his legs and parts of his arms that were not covered by runes. The room became darker, and small cracks of magical lightning could be seen in close proximity to him. The chant became faster, almost frenzied, as he picked up the ritual blade once more. He carved the knife into the traced runes. The blade was cold, biting. The runes that cut into his skin did not feel like cuts, they felt like fire spewing from his insides. The same runes that were cut on his front were being cut into his back by his magic, even more painful than the blade.

His blood flowing freely, Seraph felt the first effects of the blood loss. Small stars floated in front of his face but he ignored them. The potion was mixed into the bowl of rabbit blood and Seraph stuck two fingers in. The potioned blood felt like acid on his fingers, and had he not seen they were still there, would have thought that they were floating in the bowl. In front of him, maybe half of his arms length, he wrote runes into the air. The blood stuck as if on a wall. When a rune was finished, it moved to the side for another rune to be made. Rune after rune, most repeating, but not always. His arms dropped to his side for a moment, barely able to keep it up anymore when he finished the last rune. The circle of runes began to speed up, moving around him fast enough to blur them. He picked up the blade once more and drew a pentacle in the center of his chest, at the bottom of his stomach, and in the center of his forehead. Blood coursed down his face, obscuring his vision and burning his eyes. It would soon be over.

He placed the blade in front of him, and picked up the bowl. The dark blood and the even darker potion swirled around as he brought it to his lips. It was like drinking molten lead, burning everything that it touched. A deep rumbling met his ears as he sat the bowl back down again, empty. He realized that it was coming from him. His scream had been muddled, filled with the chant that the ritual would not let him stop. He sounded absolutely demonic as he picked up the blade

for one final time and shouted the final chant. The last syllable hung in the air as he plunged the blade in the center of his chest.

It was pain. His whole world was pain. It was his purpose and agony his life's blood. His insides burned with an intensity that he had yet to feel. The Cruciatus curse was laughable compared to this. Being disemboweled while being burned alive would have been preferable. As the magic in the room crackled, sending bolts of black lightning around the room, the runes began to circle the rabbits. Each rune found its place and soon the runes pulled away, taking the essence of the rabbits with them. The charged runes shot through Seraph at his head, chest, and stomach. What was left gathered together to form a burning rune that blasted into the pentacle on his chest, physically lifting him into the air. He was held there by the magic in the room and the pain intensified. A cracking and stretching sensation accompanied the pain now and he was sure he would pass out soon. The pain stopped, the magic in the room dispersed, and Seraph dropped to the ground like a stone.

(Black Ascension)

Seraph woke up an hour later and stood up slowly. The blood that covered his body before was gone, and so were the runic cuts and burns. He stumbled into his clothing and exited the room to find a worried looking Luna and Odd holding a wineglass filled with a red substance.

"Drink it, it's a little bit of wine and Augury blood." Odd told him, handing the glass over. Seraph drank it greedily. The bitterness of the wine was complemented by the sweetness of the blood. He felt his energy slowly returning to him, but he still felt as if he had been running for hours. 'Or days, I suppose, in my case. I can run for hours no problem...' His thoughts trailed off as he realized that there was no point for it.

"Thanks." Seraph said a little bit stronger than he thought he could.

"No problem." Odd told him.

"How do you feel? Any different?" Luna asked.

"I don't know. I feel tired and numb. I think I need to meditate." Seraph said as he handed the glass back to Odd and sat next to a wall, immediately searching for his core.

"Come, Luna. Let us leave him be for now. We should probably have the healers look at the other two boys." Odd told his daughter as they walked down the hallway.

Seraph found his core quickly and noticed that it was indeed larger than it was before. There were places that showed signs of stress, probably where it was stretched, and large cracks that were in the process of stitching themselves up, probably where it had been cracked. Magic was slowly filling up the empty space left by the expansion of his core and some of its burning glow was returning. The veins that ran off from the core looked less stiff than the last time he had seen them. He was now able to move the veins that had no place to go and attached them to his arms. It was painful, but manageable. A couple days ago he may not have said the same thing, but he had now discovered a new level of pain and he hoped that nothing would ever be comparable to it. He delved into his mind and was able to transform into his Animagus there. For the next several hours he played a somewhat violent game of tag with some of the grim puppies that filled his mind.

(Black Ascension)

"Tempus." Seraph muttered, waving his wand in front of him.

7:00 a.m. July 13, 1996

The will would be at nine this morning. Seraph had been right. He was unable to finish the rituals that he had wanted to do, but he had been able to do some. The Revealer-Eye had been more painful than having his vision corrected and the Clear-Mind had been slightly painful but mostly just cloudy. He was unable to make the remotest bit of sense for two days afterwards. He was able to have a thrilling conversation with Luna about lint and the application of toothpicks though. She wasn't 'Loony' as most of Hogwarts thought, she was rather brilliant, actually. She just hid it behind a mask of extreme

eccentricities. He got up from the chair. He had continued to study the 'Element' book and had managed to turn a ball of fire into several small balls of fire or two small discs of black fire. It was progress though, and he knew that not everything could come easy.

Luna, Neville, and Draco had also completed the Core-Breaker. Neville had been able to fit in the sleep reduction and Draco had been able to do the Revealer-Eye as well.

He got dressed in his dragon mesh pants, boots, vest, and the new cloak that Vulcan had given him, and the leather and silver metal gauntlets. He was pretty sure that the metal was the same mythrill that he had bought from Vulcan. The Black crest stood proud in black and silver on the left side of the cloak, just over the heart, there was another one on his back which was about five times larger. The Black family ring was back in its original form. The Black Katana was inside an enlarged pocket on the inside of his cloak, the blade he wore at his side was one he had found at the Keep. It was more artistic than his other blade, but could be used just as well. His hair short and spiked, looking like they could actually spear something. He looked both regal and dangerous. Everything a Black was.

The notices had arrived after he had gotten through with his first ritual. Draco, Luna, and Neville had been surprised when they received theirs. Draco had been both confused and pissed at the revelation that Seraph had been Harry Potter. Seraph explained what happened as best he could, but Draco couldn't get past the fact that he was Potter. He felt betrayed, and he did not really know why. It wasn't like Black, Potter, whoever, had been his friend. He hadn't spoken to Potter since.

For the plan to work, Seraph would need to be at Gringotts plenty early before the will reading. Harry Potter's will would be read first, then Sirius Black's. Seraph arrived ten minutes later and began to go over his holdings with Silverhook. By the end of it, he had backed WWW with nearly unlimited funding and had found several books on Jutsu from the Linksys' vault. Sirius had been right, not all of it involved magic. The technique of it was the use of hands or the body as a focus. It was around 8:50 when people were being let into the room where the reading would be held. Seraph sat in a chair in the

corner, hidden by the shadows. He had learned that if he was in a shadow and didn't want to be seen, he could blur himself into the shadow. Even if he was seen, it was more likely that the person who saw him would believe that it was a trick of the light.

The first two people in were Draco Malfoy and Narcissa Black. Narcissa had been coerced into coming by the protection that could be provided by her son as well as the emergency portkey she carried. Next were Ted and Andromeda Tonks. Ted looked uncomfortable and Narcissa and Andromeda struck up a tentative conversation. Next were Remus Lupin and Nymphadora Tonks. Tonks greeted her mother and father and joined the conversation with the two other women while Remus and Ted began to speak about something to do with magical fishing in the Bermudas Triangle.

The Weasley's and Granger were next. The twins had somber expressions and joined the conversation with Ted and Remus, adding colorful ideas like dripping levitating potion into the water to catch the fish. Charlie and Bill had been given notice but could not make it to the reading. Bill, though he worked for Gringotts, was curse breaking in Africa. Percy had not been notified. Ron looked excited, though he was trying to hide it, and failing, sending hateful glares at Malfoy. Hermione looked a bit sad but otherwise anxious. Arthur and Molly Weasley were discussing something and Ginny was crying silently. Actually she was wailing and she had been silenced. She looked terrible over all but Seraph couldn't bring himself to care. Moody walked in afterwards, and settled in a corner as well. Seraph saw him clearly though, and nodded to him, receiving one in return. Luna Lovegood and her father walked in with Neville in tow. Of course no one knew that it was Neville and so he was left alone for the most part. Remus became more interested in them once he realized that unlike Seraph, they had no smell whatsoever. He had taught Luna before, and he was sure she had had a scent then, but it was possible to mask a scent so it was also possible to create scent. Odd joined the fish conversation, saying that the best spots were in the underwater lakes or spear fishing.

Lastly was Dumbledore. He walked in as dramatically as Snape ever did; an air of sorrow around him. His robes were noticeably without color, looking the epitome of a man in mourning. Silverhook walked in

after everyone had been seated with two small flashlight looking things in his hands. All portraits were created the same way and he had contracted Gringotts into making a portrait of him, looking like Harry Potter. It knew everything that he did up until the third of July. Since he was still alive, he would be able to connect his portrait to any other at his home. Silverhook set up one of the projectors, the other one was next to it, filled with the updated echo. The echo would be placed in a portrait after the reading and it would be connected to Sirius' other portrait. The second echo would merge with the first and Sirius would have two portraits to stay in.

"Friends and colleagues of Sirius Black and Harry Potter, I welcome you to this most somber affair." Silverhook began. Seraph thought that he was laying it on thick, but nobody else noticed. "I have here before you the last will and testament of Sirius Black and Harry Potter. It is sadly ironic that the last thing that the late Mr. Potter did was make a will before tragically perishing due to a muggle transportation device." Silverhook said, indicating the silver objects. Seraph was biting the inside of his cheek to not laugh. "Without further ado." Silverhook finished, tapping one of the projectors.

A silvery gas rose up from the object until it began to form the image Harry Potter. Some sound broke through Ginny's silent crying as she broke into a new wave. Seraph felt a small amount of pity for her now. Just enough to wonder if she would commit suicide. He knew that some might consider his thinking cold or harsh, but her actions had disgusted him almost more than Ron and Hermione's put together.

"I, Harry James Potter, being of sound mind, well, I can't say much about my body, so mind will have to do, do here state my final will and testament. Well, that part is out of the way. Let's see, who's here? Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Twins, Neville, Remus, Tonks or several Tonks' actually, some Malfoy's...must not be for my will...Luna, I'll hazard to guess Mr. Lovegood, Molly and Arthur Weasley, the Headmaster of course. Good, mostly everybody I hoped to never have to see again in life or death." The silvery Harry said, shocking the room. Well, most were shocked; others were trying not to laugh or being indifferent.

"I'm dead; you can't do any more to me. No more traitorous friends, Headmasters trying to control me, or expectations from the press and the rest of the damn world. What, your shocked Dumbledore? You've been playing my life since the day my parents were killed, possibly from before. You didn't think that I wouldn't see through you eventually? Or my 'friends' trying to worm information out of me every damn time I stub a toe? You may not know everything in Hogwarts, but you know what goes on there, enough to prevent three first years from getting past protection for a stone, stopping a student getting possessed, preventing a Death Eater in disguise teach at Hogwarts. Crouch was coincidentally the second best Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher I've had in the five years that I've gone to Hogwarts. What does that tell you? That will binding potion was the last straw though. Ron, you're a jealous bastard, learn to live with what you have, which is more riches than I could ever obtain." The gaseous Harry Potter said, and Ron had to be held back from attempting to attack the echo.

"Not the brightest knife in the bucket." Harry said, confusing Ron and making Luna snort on accident, bringing attention to her.

"Hey, Luna, nice to see you, you to, Neville. You look ruff, man. Mr. Lovegood, thanks for your articles. So enlightening with a hint of confusion. Tonks, Remus, more Tonks'. I think I'm happier to see the Malfoy's than I am of seeing you, Headmaster. You know, if I weren't dead, I'd sue your ass for what you did to me and what you did with my money. But, as it is, dead people can't sue. Anyway, all of the Potter properties have been liquidated and any and all stock that I had was in control by my godfather and I don't care what he did with it. That leaves us with few physical things to give away. Neville can take my invisibility cloak, its been used frequently but its still in good condition, Luna gets a book on rare magical creatures and one on enchantments from the Potter vault, I'd like Tonks to hold my Firebolt, if that won't make Remus too mad..." Harry said, watching as Tonks turned red and Remus look affronted. Ted and Andromeda gave him angry and curious looks respectively. "I've got a trunk of stuff I think Remus might want, complete with a large warded place when in need, the Twins get some extra funding and a duplicate of the Marauder's Map if Remus will do it for them, a large hat I found in the vault for Moody, Malfoy gets a chocolate frog," At which Malfoy rose an

eyebrow, “and my hopes that he will torment Ronald Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Ginny Weasley for as long as necessary.” At which Malfoy smirked. “Ron can get fucked by Buckbeak, who incidentally goes back to Hagrid...who does not appear to be present. I’m not sure how much Hermione did was off her own volition, so I’ll say that you’re living your punishment and say no more. Ginny needs to obsess over someone else, and the Headmaster should be happy I don’t come back to haunt him. Lets see...yeah, that’s it.” The ghostly looking Harry said, looking up from a little piece of paper he was holding. No one spoke for a few minutes. Then:

“Harry, you mentioned your liquid assets.” Dumbledore prompted. The silver Harry glared at him with more malice then he had seen on anyone besides Tom Riddle. ‘Perhaps it is good that he is dead then.’ The old Headmaster thought.

“You’ve got a lot of damn nerve to even bring up money, old man. Yes, I did mention liquid assets. And there is a reason why no one outside of the Weasley twins got any. More then eight hundred million galleons went into the Harry Potter War Relief Fund, controlled by Gringotts, at the moment of my death. Families were decimated in the last war, and more will happen. This is something truly for the ‘greater good’, Dumbledore.” The echo spat.

“As a recipient of an award of service for the school I request my portrait be hung in Hogwarts. Preferably Moaning Myrtle’s Bathroom. She always said I could join her if I died.” Harry said with a laugh. While Seraph knew that his portrait would be annoyed endlessly by Myrtle, he could command the Chamber of Secrets to open to release the Basilisks he planned on putting in there. And less people would bother him if he was in an unfavorable location. And, if he was in Hogwarts, he could visit the other portraits, so he did not feel too bad for his echo. “I’m done, Silverhook.” He told the goblin who could not hid his grin.

“Yes sir. Now the will of Sirius Black.” Silverhook said before Dumbledore could comment any further. The echo Harry was placed in a portrait to watch the proceedings.



The echo stretched as it began to form, and Seraph wondered how something with no bones could crack them.

“Alright, here we go. I, Sirius Orion Black, of mostly sound mind and incredible body, do here state my updated last will and testament publicly. I see almost everyone that I asked to be here is here, missing a couple of Weasley’s and our favorite groundskeeper, but we’ll manage. Wait, where’s Harry?” Sirius asked, looking around and was honestly surprised when he saw a portrait of the boy.

“Aint that a bitch...How’d you go, pup?” Sirius asked.

“Trying to get freedom, got hit by a bus.” Harry said with a shrug. Sirius nodded, though he was slightly confused until he saw Seraph in the corner and continued.

“Okay, The Bird Club can keep that damn house, I leave Arthur Weasley my assorted muggle appliances in thanks for taking care of my godson,” Mr. Weasley could barely contain his glee, “Ten million galleons to Remus Lupin and this quaint little island, eight million and a large flat in London to Nymphadora Tonks. You can’t yell at me, ha!” Sirius said as Tonks attempted a glare despite her tears, holding on tightly to Remus’ hand. “Maybe I should have made that a dowry, eh?” Sirius said, and Remus growled at him, though it was half hearted. He was holding on to Tonks’ hand as much as she his. “That one goes later,” Sirius said absentmindedly, looking at Moody in the corner, who gave a scarred grin. “Eight million to Andromeda and Ted Tonks, and I want to give fifteen million to the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts to be dispersed by Gringotts in thanks for keeping my godson alive after all his attempts at the otherwise. Rubeus Hagrid is to receive my motorcycle, I believe it is already in his possession. I request that Narcissa Black -if she can prove that she has not served Voldemort willing and will not ever serve said Dark Wanker in any respect- to be welcomed back into the Black Family. To Draco Malfoy, if the same stipulations can be met that were set for his mother, will receive one million galleons. Not like you need the money, kid. I’d like to thank the next two people for being such good friends to my godson when he needed them.” Here Ron and Hermione looked at each other, Ron with greed in his eyes that frightened Hermione

slightly. "I leave five million galleons each to Neville Longbottom and Luna Lovegood..."

"What!" Demanded Ron. "We were Harry's friends for years, those two just showed up last year!" Ron shouted point his hand at a smirking Neville, a most frightening expression to those who knew him as a timid teen, and a thoroughly surprised Luna. "Those two losers don't deserve a damn thing! We didn't work our arses off following Potter on his every attempt for more attention to get landed with a goose egg come payout!" Ron raged, despite the attempts from Hermione to shut him up. She finally gave up and began crying softly, wondering where it had all gone wrong. They had all been friends, but the Headmaster would help her become head girl, and Dumbledore was law... 'Where did that come from?' She wondered. Her mind was so full of contradictions, Ron would help. He would make everything okay again...but Ron was a disgusting self-centered egotistical jealous cretin...and he made everything alright...

"Weasley, if you weren't so stupid, you'd be the embodiment of what people hate about Slytherin's" Sirius said. "You weren't friends, you were spy's. You get what you deserve, nothing."

"Be reasonable, Sirius. They were certainly good friends to Harry, you must give them that." Dumbledore said in there defense.

"Old man, you are now officially deaf and senile, shut the hell up." Sirius yelled, and the silence he created could be cut with a knife. It was a good thing that Sirius Black was indeed dead; otherwise Albus Dumbledore might have killed him at that moment. The carefully crafted mask of sorrow on the Headmaster's face cracked, revealing fury and indignation.

"Now see hear!" The wizened man shouted, the magic in his words set the room buzzing.

"If individuals cannot keep their comments, and or emotions, to themselves, you will be asked to leave. Forcibly. Albus Dumbledore or not." Silverhook said when Dumbledore gave him a pointed look.

“Right, well the next bit is more of an apology,” And Dumbledore looked smug, assuming he was referring to him or at least Severus. “I would say that I was detained by circumstances beyond my control, but that would be making excuses for two people who’s lives were affected by my absence. So instead I’ll say that I’m sorry for the pain that I caused you and others and I hope that you’ll forgive me in time. Title and estate of the Black family go to its rightful heir, my son.” If the silence before was deafening, this one was painful.

“Sirius, you had no son.” Dumbledore said smugly. “Now, I move to contest this entire proceeding and wish to claim the Black estate under the Head Mugwump Seizing clause.” Dumbledore said, looking like he had already won.

“A clause you had amended yourself not three days ago, I believe, Head Mugwump Albus Dumbledore.” Silverhook said with disdain. “And if there was no heir, you would indeed be able to claim the estate. However, there is an heir, and he was made Lord Black not two hours ago during a private reading.” Silverhook told him with a smile that revealed every one of his pointy teeth.

“Preposterous, I demand to see this ‘heir’.” Dumbledore said, having lost his cool a while back. He was sure it was in-between Potter’s will and Black’s.

“Then see him.” A cold voice from a corner said.

Nothing could be seen for a moment until the owner of the voice stepped out into the light. The boy that stepped out of the shadows was not what anyone, save those who knew, expected. Dumbledore recognized the cloak as that of a modified Japanese battle robe complete with gauntlets. The blade at the ‘heir’s’ side immediately put him on edge. The silver and black shield of the House of Black stood proudly on his chest. The eyes were what caught his attention most though. They were glowing dark liquid silver with a band of onyx around the outside and Dumbledore was sure that when this boy was angered his eyes would look like the metal and stone. A large black dog sat beside him, and he was sure it was a puppy, though it was the largest ‘puppy’ he had ever seen. The dog would become truly massive. Ron’s jaw dropped, Hermione looked up, shocked at the

resemblance between Sirius and this boy, no, man, who claimed to be his son. Neville nodded, as did Draco, less stiffly then he would have had he not witnessed Potter's will, or was it Black's? The twins saluted, Moody nodded as well, Luna smiled dreamily, and several others were simply shocked or pretended to be. Ginny Weasley stopped crying immediately and gained a lustful glint in her eye, apparently taking Harry's words to heart, and Seraph was sure that he was going to get ill. Dumbledore thought fast.

"Mr. Black, I wondered when you were going to join us." Silverhook said, his smirk almost audible.

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Chapter

That would be the end of this chapter. Time moved a little bit faster, a couple of highly waited events took place, and the debut of Seraph Black. Hope you guys liked the ritual part. One of my reviews said that Jutsu was 'technique', and someone else told me where I could find information on it, but my computer is without the internet at the moment so I couldn't research it before this chapter. I thank all of you who review, I really appreciate the comments, the good more then the bad, of course, but constructive criticism is essential. I hoped to convey in the last chapters that even though Seraph and co. have gotten stronger, strength isn't everything. Seraph knows that he needs to start studying, but the fight was good experience.

Next chapter will include the time room. Has to. I can't think of anything else to do with the next chapter, so there. The time room won't be a 'one day is a year' type deals. Well, essentially it is based off of that, but it won't be exactly. I figure I'll take something from DBZ, Naruto, modified vampire lore, a hint of Matrix, and some HP magic, and press puree until it hits the ceiling.

For those of you who think that there is too much outside of canon going into this fic, well, be glad I haven't watched as much Inuyasha as I wanted and incorporated it into the fic...wait, I did that too... Any body with knowledge on 'blood magic', tell me in a review, if you will, please.

